

BLUE
PETE'S
DILEMMA

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LUKE ALLAN

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BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

WHAT THIS STORY IS ABOUT

Blue Pete, secretly chosen by the Mounted Police to capture an Indian murderer, in his characteristic way picks up the trail and follows it into the mountains. He becomes involved in a bank-robery that earns him a new and implacable enemy who dogs his path throughout the chase of the murderer—a perilous, unrelenting chase in the depth of winter. Disguised as an Indian, Blue Pete moves from tribe to tribe, helped and hindered by the red men. He faces zero cold, wild animals, and flying bullets, and all the time he must keep secret the task he works at.

Finally, he faces a dilemma where duty and instinct struggle for mastery.

Another magnificent story of the imitable Blue Pete, whose exploits have thrilled tens of thousands.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BLUE PETE: OUTLAW

BLUE PETE BREAKS THE RULES

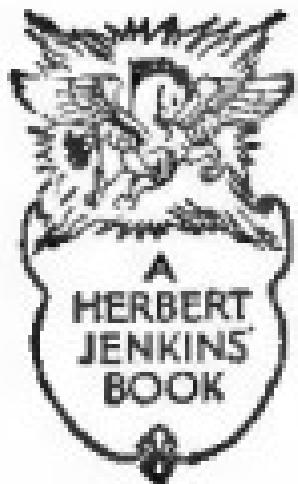
BLUE PETE PAYS A DEBT

BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

by

LUKE ALLAN

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*All the characters in this book are imaginary and have
no relation whatever to any living persons*



THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN
COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE
AUTHORISED ECONOMY STANDARDS

BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

CHAPTER I

UNEASY INDIANS

A n average life detached itself from the colony surrounding over the aqueduct which ran across the Mountain River but such an event of such magnitude as a few moments and time by other means, as Father's death, further extended it considerably. Another circumstance was that he had argued against the young Indians and their leaders at Mountain Hill for thirty years back, and however good a reformer at the first, he had proved himself and

He had his last lesson to teach before closing a tragic chapter. He sat at the window, his thoughts the floor had been broken through again with the jagged and harsh of prying fingers outside. Now and then he was feeling more and more anxious for his safety, for the Inspector had come again. If the floor had nothing done, had ever been done around it. His portion however, was in a different place from the others, it was an idea of the surviving Indians that he might walk across with traps about.

He was the man who before seated behind the desk believed no sign that he was aware of the floor's condition. If further, and was requested that the Inspector's attention was called to something vastly more important, he could be forgotten, he may be saved himself. He ran across the floor, his hands being held outside, looking through the glass glass. From a stranger would have indeed the task of examining in the house over which the shaggy, shaggy leaves the lightning of the fire, etc.

Through the windows South Railway Street lay open to inspection from right to left and the movement of the Inspector was even observed that they followed without moving along the street.

Without, he stepped back at the table, seated chair and a hand flew to a push button beneath the desk.

Back in the office office at the rear of the barracks Sergeant Malton started as the bell over his door pinged. For a second

BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

or two he watched the little clapper tremble, then, rising, he tugged his tunic down and passed out into the hall. A constable seated at a narrow desk there shook his head in answer to a dumb look of enquiry, and spread his hands.

The Sergeant knocked at a door on his left.

"Come in! Come in!"

In the tone was impatience and protest making it appear that the Sergeant was somehow at fault and Mahon entered and took his stand silently and stiffly inside.

Inspector Barker did not turn. His attention was fixed beyond the window. Impatiently he beckoned.

"Here Mahon quick!" He pointed.

Mahon hurried to the desk and stopped to follow the pointing finger.

Before the American Hotel, midway along South Railway Street two Indians lounged toward Toronto Street. Nothing more.

To one less familiar with local conditions it would have meant nothing. Indians were not uncommon in Medicine Hat. There was an encampment of Blackfeet in the ravines of the cutbank toward the east and they gathered on the station platform within a stone's throw of the barracks, to meet every transcontinental train peddling polished pseudo-buffalo horns, beadwork baskets, and leather moccasins.

But on the whose there were wont to travel singly, or in broken file silent isolated. In pairs they were conspicuous.

"Something wrong there," muttered the Inspector. He need not have spoken for already a tangle of excitement, matching his superior's had struck through Sergeant Mahon's veins. "They're nervous," the Inspector continued as if talking to himself. "They're frightened, and they've come to town to make themselves look intrepid and to stifle their courage. That's the third part I've seen in half an hour."

His hand flew out to point up Main Street, the street that stretched away from beside the barracks to the southern cutbank where the town ended. "There's a pair now. Ho-ro! Get out and see what's the matter. I haven't seen so many Indians on the street since Grey Coyote got into that mess with Blue Pete.¹ Do a bit of ferreting. They'll talk to you, if to anyone. Hurry before that pair reach the corner."

Sergeant Mahon wheeled and hurried to his office, and

¹ Blue Pete's Robot

in less than a minute he was out in the street. With the opening of the barracks door every evidence of haste vanished. Lounging out to Main Street he turned along it toward the railway tracks. At the end of the station platform he paused for a moment and glanced indifferently along it. Every movement till then a picture of ease why was merely out to pass the time with no destination in mind.

The Indians had to be handled with care except in moments of emergency. Their action must be swift and ruthless. Always suspicious of the law and the law they were never at ease within sight of the Mounted Police division. There were a couple of reasons for that and the police knew it. There still lingered in the red man's mind a silent resentment against horses that had driven him from his own open spaces and had cut off his new and unacceptable laws in bringing in ancient rights. Almost equally embarrassing was the sense of guilt in every Indian's mind for they knew themselves as potential law breakers held to conformity only by fear and a repulsive suspicion.

In the market of skins measured by town near Sergeant Mahon was a fine figure of a man a commanding one. Of medium height only his straight back square head broad nose and rugged features never failed to have their effect on law breakers who might have desired a less impressive figure. The mere power of him on silent watchful attitude had saved him from many a fight that might have gone badly with him had pulled him through dangers that would otherwise have proved too much for him.

Of the Melbourne Flat detachment he stood in best with the Indians. They had always found him fair & unrelenting and they had learned to trust him. They feared him even while they respected him.

At the corner of Main and South Railway Streets he appeared still undeterred. The incoming Indians drew not so much as a glance. But the moment the barracks door opened they had seen him and their usual stroll altered a little bringing them closer together. Inspector Parker, watching every movement understood they had broken these silence.

They dare not turn back but their advance was slower, as if delaying with the hope that the Sergeant would turn along South Highway Street.

When however he turned up Main Street their agitation displayed itself in a reforming of the single file, their eyes turned downward they tilted to the inside of the sidewalk, clutching their blankets more tightly about them.

Mahon continued to show no sign that he was aware of them his attention directed, for the moment across the street to the entrance to the Royal Hotel stables. It was not until he was almost on them that he appeared to notice them. Then he stopped.

"Hello, Lone Wolf!"

The leading Indian raised his eyes, and a sad smile flitted over his coppery countenance, but he did not speak. He would have passed on had not Mahon stepped before him tapping his shoulder in a friendly way. The second Indian pulled up in line, and stood in silence. Mahon turned to him.

"What's on your mind, Big Otter?"

The question had no special significance. The Mounted Police had found it well to treat the Indians as children when there was no reason to be serious. The Indians liked it, it reassured them.

Lone Wolf granted "Take a walk," he muttered. It was explanation not an order.

Mahon laughed. "All right. I understand." The laugh somehow added weight to it. "What have you to tell me?"

Lone Wolf squirmed, and looked anxiously about. Plainly he wished to speak, but feared to.

Mahon understood that too, and turned away. "All right. I'll meet you at the catbanks in an hour." Without waiting for a reply he continued up the street.

Back in the barracks Inspector Barker, reading every move, as he thought, turned. "Darn him! Doesn't he see they're pulling his leg? Doesn't he know the Indians well enough by this time for that?" He was growling to himself. Now he's messed things up for good. They know we're suspicious and their lips are closed. If he doesn't see something serious has happened he ought to be a -a town policeman, not a Mounted. He squirmed angrily in his chair. "Now I'll have to get Blue Pete working on it--and that always means trouble. It's dangerous, he hates em like rattlers. Hasn't any patience with em and that's strange seeing he's got some of their blood in his own veins. Oh, well!"

He heaved a heavy sigh and dropped his eyes to the form he had been tormenting by the Superintendent at Letchbridge when the Indians came in. These form the red tape that had ever since its introduction been the bane of his existence. Angels be sure there has been a time when he was perfect, much has ever been in the character for hundreds of men about Medicine Hat when as he still stated the grub had not been plentiful even with no railway within half a thousand miles and with only his own men to eat in his station, what of the rest.

Sergeant Mahon continued. This was entirely unexpected. The Inspector's countenance brightened. He was rather pleased at the ease with which he had reached the purpose for which he had been summoned. He told again that these Indians were often as he reported in the files would never turn up as reported, without at least some just of the others that surrounded them. The Indians never openly defied Mahon. These orders having too much on their shoulders to risk the resultant enquires.

Winding into Fourth Avenue Mahon passed eastward to Terminus Street and turned down the hill to South Railway Street. On the way he passed two more pairs of Indians but merely glanced them a final skipping. He was now more beweary of a futile chattering within him. More and more he was convinced that something serious had happened. Leaving the station platform he ran the tracks at the foot of Terminus Street. He noted that the Indians always gathered there to meet the agent due trains. Indians were less numerous than usual and instead of standing about separately, as a rule when once there were clustered together as if the same sort of social support.

The train after pulling down the western embankment from the river bank as he ran he thought he saw a street. It blocked his way to the barricade. It held up two or four of Indians and he noticed that they did not even look at him but edged to the middle of the road onto the way was clear.

Reaching the barricade he started off briskly toward his men. At a point to be stopped by the thundering voice of the Inspector.

"Name?" said Mahon. "I've run round up the works now for sure. No wonder you want to speak to your own people. Come in here!"

Mahon pushed the door open and entered.

The Inspector continued to growl. I saw how they worked you for a sucker Mahon. Couldn't you see it? Don't you know the Indians well enough, by this time, to see through their little game? Disgust and anger almost choked him, and he struck the table with clenched fist.

Mahon straight and stiff waited until the outburst was ended. I must meet Lone Wolf in an hour near the encampment or he is a confirmed quonth.

The Inspector swung about to face him, manner and expression changed. You are? Good! That's fine! He was a waver as frank in commendation as in condemnation. "Any idea what's up?"

"Not the slightest sir but I imagine it's serious. They're both worked up. Even the constable at the station shoves it."

The Inspector沉思ed for a few moments at the window. Then he grabbed at his watch. "An hour, you say? Man alive, almost half the time's gone now! What are you waiting for? Hurry or they'll hange these mounds. Once then do that we'll have to work everything out for ourselves. Ah—would you like me to go with you?"

"Then're expecting one sir," replied the Sergeant. "It never seems as serious to talk to me."

It was diplomatic enough not to hurt and the Inspector waved him away.

In his own office the Sergeant started to change to his brown field tunic but no second thoughts retained the scarlet one. It was less businesslike and suggestive. It would appear to onlookers that he was merely out for a ride.

In five minutes he rode through the central gate of the barracks. Constable Langley, youngest constable and still enthusiastic, closed the gate regretfully behind him. "If it's murder or anything like that, Sergeant, were me in on it, will you?"

Mahon reined in and looked down gravely into the youthful face. "Some day, Langley, you'd be satisfied to take on only what's given you and be grateful it isn't more. And, by the way, fooling about with the Indians is something different from mixing it with Montana rustlers. You'll learn that too."

He set off at a walking pace northward, away from the town.

CHAPTER 11

SERGEANT MAHON ENQUIRIES

JLIMITEK the big black Sergeant Mahon rode did not like it. Had he been turned through the town and away over the prairie toward the south he would have sought for his head in that tree town but for open prairie level as prairies go, but not so wide and open that hospitable ranch stations were not awaiting him as well as hundreds of Indians in stature; brown ones before which he could parade his size even though parade had never interested with a cause friendship.

Northward, however, the way was blocked in half a mile by the sweep of the South Saskatchewan River nothing in that direction but the rag ends of the town on the flats, where spring floods were wont to play annual havoc. Beyond the river even had they been able to cross it was wider more open space than southward but unattractive and desolate Jupiter had been there one or two and had known only trouble exposure to scorching sun and little rest.*

Mahon followed the street past the hospital to a point where it seemed about to peter out and turned eastward along the river's edge on a rough track which he was largely confined to the arroyos, canyon race won one year by Blue Pete a famous little pony Whiskers against the best Montana had to offer.*

The road ended at the baseball grounds. Beyond to the east was a rough, untracked, broken area that ended in the hills and gulches of the cutbank where the Blackfeet had their encampment.

Part of the rail to the bushes that grew along the river's edge Mahon called Jupiter to a faster pace and after a quarter of an hour reached the baseball grounds. Not far from the grounds a few scattered houses had been erected by a speculative builder and Mahon noticed that from each as he passed emerged dusky women and children. Not much traffic passed there way and some of them called cheerily to him. He waved and passed on.

He had no wish to attract attention. His meeting with the Indians must be in private, for several reasons. Only

* The Tenderfoot.

* The Register of Blue Pete.

if they were also to walk the Indians talk and the town-people must be at an impasse for separation. But he turned these thoughts toward the crown royal's bower of shade it was like I had been in his home. The Indian had earned the respect of the townsmen but Indians always surpassed the truth and the Master Price had known it was easier to get along with the Indians if the townpeople evinced no interest in them.

To Mahon's amazement he saw that he could take the long way over! It might make him late but the only thing to do was to ride up the hill to the south-east of the town, and run back over the open prairie by way of Dunmore Junction. He knew the Indians were already aware of his approach that they would have warhorns blowing his every move and they would understand what he had in mind.

Crossing the railway track he leaped the hill and out of sight of the town built in the depression turning sharply toward Dunmore Junction where a branch railway the Cross Roads struck off to ward left ridge and N. west.

He did not delay. At the first pass he rode so he without attracting too much attention from any chance observer, he rode along to a point where the railway dropped in a winding curve down the ridge toward the town. Several hundred yards away was the Junction station but only a handful of men worked there, and none would be free to follow him.

From that point the Indians appeared as a jagged projection of heights intruding in the valley. There were no steep inclines and most were the old woods. The railway had found a route here before but there was a section of a road so that he decided to use the railway itself. He had done that before and Jupiter knew how to handle the decent over the ties. There were to be sure several more obscure exits from the depression and most of them were known to him but he did not wish the Indians to know he knew them.

Jupiter picked his way downward skipping gingerly from tie to tie intent on every move waiting a little in protest Mahon paid no attention indeed he seemed half asleep. But he knew that Indian eyes were fixed on his every move.

Halt was down, a finger of hell stopped short and after a glance about him he left the railway track and turned to a gentle slope, keeping to his right as much as the hills per-

settled. After a time he was well enough to go to the garden and walk about.

Soldiers I saw went about before him. I was afraid he had seen them in his dream. It startled the Sergeant though for the last time was given him in a vision where the Indians were seen and heard and it was a vision and unexpectedly the way he had been told me, and I waited. Some cards were laid down and a game was played with Big Sister.

I saw the other women. Mahon who was still ill stood a little apart. She looked but did not speak. A number of birds, brighter birds, flew about her. For a few moments she stood stiffly and then began to move. The other Indians were slightly bowed. They were all very pale and wan.

Presently Mahon had seen his other friends and so was roused from his Malady. He was now a pale, thin looking man, with a thin face and a wrinkled brow. His hair was thin and grey. He had been ill. He had been ill and his skin had been ill. But he had been ill and his skin had been ill. The whole world outside had been ill and his skin. But I like the Indians and had been ill. They had been ill along the streets of Mexico and the world around them had been breaking into pieces at the sight of his going. His Army friends had many rated as dead and lost. He was never seen in the town. That night he had been ill and the Indians were ill and that was part of his punishment. I suppose that I was a bad boy but it was perhaps too because there was that they were ill all through the night that the world went ill. I told the old Indian who was the King of Mexico that he had suffered a great agony that made him want to die the morning after all the soldiers I guess. He said "I am sorry to hear what agonies he might have had here but you will be soon leave the mountain he was out of hearing."

Taking his stand, now, before Jupiter. He Who Should be King. An old Indian had uttered a word. Sergeant Mahon remained, waiting, silent, his face pale, disconsolate. The time to speak of such things had passed.

"He is dead, is buried and singled. Come I to meet you again. He Who Should be King."

The old Indian sat. Many things had not gone as he expected and he said them he accepted the proffered hand in a gush, not to reveal anything of his strength and the desire to exhibit it.

"He Who Should welcome the Monarch" he granted.

Mahon broke through threatened preliminaries. "You have something to tell me?"

He Who Shoots waved a hand behind him without turning, and his followers vanished almost as abruptly as they had appeared. The Indian pointed to the slope beside them.

"He Who Shoots has much to tell," he said. "We will sit down. The Blackfeet are in trouble."

"Yes, the Inspector knew that." Mahon seated himself lazily. The chief squatted cross-legged beside him.

"There is death among us, Sergeant."

"You mean murder, of course."

He Who Shoots nodded.

CHAPTER III

"IT'S MURDER!"

IT was early evening when Sergeant Mahon rode into the barracks yard. Inspector Barker had not yet left for supper, for hours he had fumed and fretted, and as the afternoon advanced he had called in Corporal Jenkinson and given orders to ride straight to the Indian encampment to see what had happened, only to countermand the order before the corporal reached the door. He had confidence in Mahon and to send another officer after him would exhibit a fear it was unwise to display before the Indians.

He heard the back door open, and the brisk step of the Sergeant, and he turned to his own door and threw it open.

A glance at Mahon's face told him that he bore grave news, and an involuntary sigh broke from him. The Indians were always a problem, requiring a patience and forbearance he was ill fitted to use. When involved in crime they gave the Mounted Police their most difficult and dangerous work. Their cunning, their stubbornness even in face of threat, their clannishness, their natural cruelty and rascality, made it particularly difficult to treat them with the strict formality and tardiness of the law. Except for Sergeant Mahon, he had not a man in the detachment to whom he could entrust such affairs.

The Sergeant followed him into his office, and closed the door. The Inspector dropped wearily into the rickety swivel

chair, legs spread wide, nervously twisting the ends of his mustache.

"Well, I can tell by your face, Mahon, there's hell to pay" He pointed to the one empty chair.

Mahon seated himself "It's murder," he said.

The Inspector's teeth bared "If they'd murder one another off and be done with it life would be worth living here. Well, go on, go on. Who's murdered?"

"It's Bear Head, sir."

Inspector Barker nodded thoughtfully "And I'll wager he deserved it. It's good riddance, and . . ." He cleared his throat asty and tightened the collar of his tunic about his neck. "Who did it?"

"North Wind they say. That's what He Who Shouts says."

The Inspector whistled through his teeth "Do you believe him?"

"Absolutely—though I don't know North Wind personally."

"North Wind. Who-ell! I think I know him. He's one of the last I'd expect to murder without cause . . . and with Bear Head the victim . . . Not that North Wind wouldn't use a gun with any sort of excuse, but he's had a good reputation--and he's got a squaw with a good record, hasn't he? But you don't know him. You say the chief told you this. Then he must have come out of his shell to tell us anything. Scared I suppose."

"They're certainly uncomfortable about it, sir," said Mahon. He was silent for a few moments, his forehead wrinkled.

The Inspector noticed it. "You've something more to tell. Go on, man, go on."

"Yes, they're frightened, and I've an idea it's from something more than the mere fact of the murder. It looks to me like a guilty conscience though I find it hard to figure why. I believe He Who Shouts when he says the murder was committed by North Wind, but there's more than that."

"Connivance?" suggested the Inspector.

"Some sort of connivance, though I can't imagine what. He answered all my questions, but . . ."

"Where's North Wind?"

"That's what I was coming to, sir. When I asked that question I sensed something wrong. North Wind is gone,

of course, they pretend not to know where. I'm not sure they would tell us if they knew."

"Could we use pressure to make them speak?" Before Mahon could reply the Inspector answered himself. "But no, if they won't speak nothing will make them." It means we have to take up a base without any direction clues, I suppose. And it won't be an easy one."

The Sergeant agreed with a nod. It will be dangerous, too, sir. From what I gathered North Wind is a fighter. They tell me he's their best shot that he wins all their rifle contests without trouble."

"Did they give you no cause for the killing?"

"No, sir. They don't know what would appear to us as a good cause and they won't take a chance. We've drilled them into the belief that we think killing is always murder—when anyone does it but ourselves."

The Inspector frowned and jabbed at the bushes with a brittle paperknife. Some damned Indian foolishness. I'll warrant some of their silly laws broken. How was Bear Head murdered?"

He was shot."

"You saw the body?"

"Yes, sir. They had sense enough to keep it for us to see. I insisted on not only seeing the body, but also the spot where the shot was fired. It was out on the prairie in a couice south of Damsmore Junction where there are a lot of bilberry bushes that pretty well covers all I learned."

The Inspector thought it over. And North Wind has disappeared. He threw out his hands. You see what it means? We've got half a continent to search."

He took Wild Flower with him.

"Who's Wild Flower?"

"The squaw you mentioned, sir. That's what helps to convince me that the other Indians must know where he went. The pair could not have fled after the murder without collecting something for the flight and the whole camp knows of the murder. Pissin' Tom's prepared to do everything they can to protect North Wind. It may be only because Bear Head was something of a bully, but I imagine they justify the murder in their own minds."

The Inspector glowered at the floor for a full two minutes in silence. Suddenly he looked up. "Not an idea where he went, eh?"

The Sergeant shook his head. "Every time I came around to see you, He Who Shouts clamped his lips together."

"He is—He'll have among his own race somewhere, of course but that helps little. There are a dozen reserves. But on, he wouldn't dare go where the Indian agents would make enquiries about strangers. No, he and his squaw would be sure to make for one of the scores of Indian encampments farther west out in the foothills."

"Unless they hide in the Cypress Hills, sir," suggested Mahon. "They would keep in touch with their friends there."

The Inspector's eyes flashed. That would be too easy. Blue Pete would rout them out in no time. They couldn't hide themselves in the Hills where he wouldn't find them."

"If he would undertake the job, sir," the Sergeant put in.

"Why wouldn't he? He hates Indians."

"Hates them enough not to wish to become involved with them unless he has to," quipped Mahon. "We might get them ourselves in the Hills. But if they've gone to the foothills..."

If they have I suppose I'll have to hand the chase over to Macleod or Cagney, and you know what that would mean. I've learned that when I want work done I must do it myself. Besides, Nor' Wind would be no more than a name to them, and they're not interested, as we are. Did you talk to other Indians?"

"As much as I could. But they refused to talk plainly. It had been arranged that He Who Shouts should do all the talking."

The Inspector considered. "Do you think we might wheedle anything out of Lone Wolf or Big Otter if we got them here—or even from the chief himself?"

The reply was a smile. It was enough, and the Inspector swore.

"I've got to be two men in this district, one with the Indians the other with the whites. The double rôle gets tiresome. Have you any suggestions?"

Sergeant Mahon stared thoughtfully through the window. "I would suggest, sir, that we make a search near home—in the Hills."

"There's nowhere else anyone could hide near here. But the Indians know the Hills as none of us do. I'd have to use Blue Pete—and I'm reluctant to set him to work."

again until he's forgotten the months he's just spent in the Badlands.¹ There's a bit of guilty conscience there yet, and I'd like to give him time to get over it. Besides, the Indians would have no compunction about shooting him at sight, for they hate him as much as he does them. It would be like waving a red flag before an angry bull. There'd probably be a few more murders for us to punish—and Blue Pete might be one of the victims. . . . No, we'll undertake that hunt ourselves."

He slouched over the desk, thinking heavily. Suddenly he said:

"Tomorrow you start. If you need help take one of the boys with you. But you'll have to go carefully. The gentlest-seeming Indian is a potential gunman when cornered—and they often feel cornered when they're not. North Wind wouldn't hesitate to shoot if it offered a chance to escape." He frowned into Mahon's face. "I'm giving you all the devilish jobs, Mahon, but . . ." He cleared his throat. "That's all. Don't come back without something to tell me."

CHAPTER IV

IN THE CYPRESS HILLS

SERGEANT MAHON drew in his mount and sat looking about. The shadows lay deep among the trees the tiny bright patches, where the sun managed to penetrate the thick foliage, only adding to the gloom and impenetrability of the forest. It was a breathless day, and there, in the forest, he felt as if he would suffocate, as if the great trees bent sneeringly down to him, daring him to go on, reaching out their long branches to grasp and smother him.

It was the heart of the Cypress Hills that curious patch of wooded heights and hollows that stretches for a hundred miles in a ten-mile strip along the southern edge of Alberta into Saskatchewan. Elsewhere, for hundreds of miles, the Canadian West was bare prairie.

Two weeks had passed since Inspector Barker had sent him into the Hills to search for a murderer, two weeks of ceaseless riding. Day and night he had wandered through

¹ *Blue Pete Outlaw*.

the same day and night he had hoped getting his teeth against a conviction that the time was wasted. On the Medicine Hat detachment he knew the H.H.s best knew them better than anyone but the Indians and Blue Pete but he had a superstitious feeling. He knew better than anyone that it was a fool to much as a character of little since the Hills might shelter an animal without leaving a trace.

On another day he had not been alone. Jenkins and Langley had been sent from the former an old companion with little hope of success from the first. The latter always filled with the enthusiasm of youth and perseverance but it was on Langley that Mahon had confidence for he was never disengaged and he had done much wandering in the Hills during the months when Blue Pete had disappeared.⁴

They had found nothing nothing to give them hope. There was no sign that any one had been in the Hills within months. They had been sent back with sights. The birds had been perched and the many hunting grounds about the streams that used the ravens had told nothing save for the usual life the Hills were known.

Jenkins and Langley had gone Langley first to telephone the Inspector from the Eagle Battle Mounted Police but And the Inspector angry and disappointed had ordered them back to the barracks.

Sergeant Mahon had dared to doubt. During the last few days he had had a strange feeling as he rode. He would find himself staring through the trees as if expecting someone yet he heard no sound. He did not see alone. At first he attributed it vague to the atmosphere the trees had acquired for the great silence the absence of life and the vegetative growth everywhere had contributed to make up his imagination. Hundreds of animal even he knew were always on him yet the sight of so much as a bird was unusual. Timber wolves, too, were everywhere yet he had never seen one in the Hills though often at night their barking sent chills down his spine.

It was the feeling of being followed of being watched, that deceived him to delay showing the Inspector's order to return. There was something yet to be explained.

All today he had ridden alone and more and more he was convinced that someone was about keeping out of sight.

⁴ Blue Pete Oath.

but keeping him so dark. But now with nothing coming on he decided to give up and leave the place. He was worried too at his failure to find a place North Wind's whereabouts. The inspected were have been the day ahead of time of pleasure & heat. Invertigating in the House appeared to see at him the trees the shadows of all the passing streams. There was no place to hidden his legs from.

The shadowed regions. He walked off his path. Almost seven o'clock. And it was a great comfort to the pleasure by that one the trees would be dark and Jupiter would have to pick them out. Up the ridge in the month of September the sun it was cold. After there was a long place I might but darkness. But when it was the landscape he would find it was almost to make Jupiter annoyed the night in a state of awe. And the sun had for the first time the a brilliant. Transcendent splendor in the sky above.

He set off northward. He took his path through the woods through here. He was full his way, but not to heat but with the thought that a winter was approaching. There was nothing he could do about it but wait alone and then nothing his heart to listen. Jupiter the was anxious. His master was never at ease except when there was that his dozing ears and wide nostrils and available breathing and sobering glances meant little.

Darkness covered him sooner than he supposed so that where he sat now at the edge of the trees it was dark even dark out in the prairie. For a while time he sat in trying intently watching a long thin willow tree. The many things several times he saw it from will bring the leaves to back behind. It reminded him of his mother's days on a lower road at night and he was comforted still.

A shadow moved before him and stopped.

"You don't want me here do you?" the sergeant asked & voice he recognized with a thrill of fear.

He laughed. "Ha! That changes everything. You've been following me about for days Pete. Why the devil did you do that?"

"I followed you for a week and the half breed. I made money with all the waste time North Wind ain't here he never was."

"What do you know about North Wind. And how do you know I've been looking for him?"

"Don't Pete chattered. I knowed. That ain't been no Northern

here for weeks. I keep 'em party well, skeered off. This is whar I hang out most o' the time, an they ,es' nachully don' like runnin' up ag'in me when thar ain't no Mounties to keep us friendly."

"How did you know I was looking for North Wind?" Mahon repeated.

"Yah gotta find a murderer, aschun?"

"Did you know about the murder?"

"I git about some," replied the half breed.

"How long since you were in Medicine Hat?"

"Matter of a couple weeks, I reckon. I seen yuh ride off here to look for the Neche. Wotcha need to keer? A Neche less is that much less trouble for the Mount es."

Mahon shrugged. "Perhaps you're right there. But, as you say, it's a murderer, and that's all that matters."

"He ain't in the Hills, never has bin."

"You give me your word for that?"

Blue Pete grunted. "Ever know me to perteck a Neche, Sergeant?"

"No-o!"

"I'd find him fer yuh ef he was here."

Mahon's mind worked quickly. "If you know about the murder, perhaps you know the cause of it--what the trouble was."

"I didn't keer none. One less Neche, that's all that mattered to me . . . Ef it wasn't I'd help yuh find him."

"I wish to Heaven you would, Pete," declared the Sergeant fervently.

Blue Pete was silent for a few moments. "I am' takin' on no more jobs, not yes' now I . . ."

"Not as a special favour to me, Pete?" Inspector Barker has given the job to me, and I've done nothing so far. Now I must return and be stormied at for fashng. If you could do this for me . . ."

"Yuh wudn't tell th' Inspector?" The half-breed's voice was low and excited.

"I could scarcely lend myself to that, Pete. The Inspector would be as grateful as I'd be."

"Shure. An' he'll gimme the job. I might help yuh, but I do want no job jes' now. I bin 'way all summer, an' the j-Bar-Y needs me."

"It never needs you, Pete," protested the Sergeant in a hurt voice.

"I ain't goin' to," repeated the half-breed stubbornly "I jes' neschally reach fer much as when I smell a Neche No. sur, I ain't gitton into no more trouble this year. I got skeered 'nuff over knockin' that skunk, Bell Scarway off ' Jes' stopped yuh to tel. yuh to save yer time lookin' fer North Wind here in the Hills. S long."

The shadow at the edge of the trees vanished. There was scarcely a sound to mark its progress. Mahon called the half-breed's name twice but there was no reply. Gloomily he turned to the open prairie.

CHAPTER V

BLUE PETE STARTS TO WORK

LATE the following evening Sergeant Mahon rode into the barracks yard and wearily dismounted. Langley took Jupiter and jerked a thumb toward the building. "Go in and take some of it yourself, Sergeant—if you have any consideration for the rest of us."

Inside Priest, seated before the desk in the hall, beckoned to him. "The Inspector wants to see you the moment you return," he whispered. "And I don't envy you. Jenkinson and Langley came in yesterday. Jenkinson's gone off already to see what can be done out from Marked. Some body's going to have to search the Indian camps down there. I'm glad it's not me."

Mahon stalked wearily into his own office, changed his tunic, combed his hair, and with a sigh of resignation went forward to get it over in the Inspector's office.

Fifteen minutes later he emerged from the interview in a white heat, grabbed his Stetson and stamped out into the street. He was convinced that in another three minutes he would have handed in his resignation—until he remembered that he had felt the same way a hundred times before. Wrapped in his anger and resentment—and in the thought that perhaps the Inspector was not so far wrong—he walked slowly up Main Street. As he passed the opening to the Royal Hotel stables he had a hasty impression of someone dismounting there in the dim light. So unimportant was it that he did not even look.

¹ Blue Pete Breaks the Rules

At the corner of Fourth Avenue he wakened to a feeling that he had been followed more than half-way up the block. He did not look back, but continued to the corner. His first thought was to turn along Fourth Avenue, it would give him a chance to look behind without appearing suspicious. On second thoughts however he continued along Main Street.

As he passed the Men's Club, on the corner across Fourth Avenue, a great slouching figure lounged past.

There was no mistaking that shape, that powerful, muscular walk, even in the dim light.

"Hello, Pete" he called in a low voice.

The half breed did not stop. But back to the Sergeant drifted a few words "Meet yuh up next corner. Darker thar."

The natural gas street light that usually shone on the next corner happened to be out. There Blue Pete awaited him.

"Thar's eyes everywhars, Sergeant," he declared. "They'd think a lot o' nasty things if they seen us talkin'. I seen yuh lookin' purty blue. What's the matter?"

They crowded into the fence about a dark house.

"Oh I've been getting the usual rakin' over for failing to do what I was sent to do. I didn't think my feelings showed so plainly."

Blue Pete checked. "When yuh didn't even look whar I was desmountin' in the hotel yard I knowed suttin' was wrong. Mostly yuh do' muss nothin'. Gittin' the Inspector in yer hair, eh?"

"Yes, damn you, and you can take a lot of the blame, Pete" growled Mahon. "Some day I'm going to break loose and bite myself. The way I feel I'd give myself hydrophobia. I——"

"Me to blame?" The half-breed's eyes were big with shock. "I ain't done nothin' since I come back from the Badlands. I bin in town once, an' I ain't bin talkin' to nobody 'ceptin' Mira an' the boys—an' to you in the Hills yesterday. Thar ain't nothin' yuh kin blamer on me, Sergeant."

Mahon made an angry sound. "You know what's the matter. I've found out nothing about North Wind. I haven't the faintest idea where he is."

"But whar d'l come in?"

"You're the only one can get me out of the mess. You're the only one can find where North Wind has gone."

BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

Blue Pete shuffled nervously and ran a huge hand over his lips. "That ain't nothing," he began.

"You can find out if you want to," persisted the Sergeant. "If I don't know soon there'll be the devil to pay. The Inspector is in a vile mood about it. It's two weeks since the murder, and we're as much in the dark as ever."

"What can I do?"

"You can find where he went."

Blue Pete did not deny it. He hesitated. "Would that get you outa the mess?"

"It would help. When we find where he is we can get hold of him."

The half-breed shook his head doubtfully. "Mebbe isn't so easy. Th' Inspector says I allus git yuh into a mess—an' myself too. I sure ain't got no patience with them Neches. I'd shore git into trouble."

"You've handled them before" pleaded Mahon hopefully. "This time I'm asking you to do it for me."

Blue Pete squirmed uncomfortably. "Wish yuh wudn't put it that way, Sergeant. Them Neches do like me no better'n I do them. They ain't got over Grey Coyote's an' a few more times I run up ag'in' 'em. I'm jes' p'sum to 'em."

Though he felt mean about it, the Sergeant persisted. "I hate to ask it, Pete, but the Inspector has put it up to me. And what more can I do? I could hang around the Blackfeet for the next ten years and learn nothing more than I know now. You've got ways of . . ."

"Th' Inspector do like my ways none, an' I ain't got no others. None that's any good, leastwise."

"But it's the sort of thing you like, Pete. You like getting one on the Indians."

Perhaps it was the picture of "giving one on the Indians" that turned the scales. Blue Pete shook his head gravely. "Reckon yuh're takin' a darn big chance, Sergeant."

Mahon had difficulty in restraining a smile. Working among the Indians would be Blue Pete's chance, not his. "I'm not asking you to do anything illegal, not suggesting it, but I'm helpless and I'm turning to the one friend who can help me."

There was silence for a few minutes. Mahon waited.

"Gimme four-five days," said the half-breed. Turning
"Blue Pete, Rebel."

strangely away he disappeared into the darkness of Fifth Avenue.

The telephone on the desk before Inspector Barker twanged and he picked it up impatiently.

"Hello, hello! Inspector Barker speaking. What is that? Right out I was stable last night, you say? Here right under my nose. Good God man! What next? Come right down here and tell me all about it."

Twenty minutes later an excited man pushed open the bazaar door — added to a chair seated at the half-desk and tapped his foot on the Inspector's chair. In the last few minutes Matt had been a nervous boy passing and repassing the door but he heard only the muffled voices with new gloom, then a click of feet and came an exclamation from the Inspector. Then the man stopped, wiping his forehead.

"What's that? What's that?" Matt said angrily, and he turned to the Inspector's chair. The Inspector sat with an impulsive, indignant expression on his face.

"My God what next? He exploded spreading his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Yes, sir?"

"They're rustling horses from right under our noses now, right here in town. Larry Heath has just told me someone stole his horse from the stable last night."

A low warning rang in the Sergeant's head but he failed to understand its significance. That's one of his two fears —

Has he ever had another horse — accounted the Inspector.

It was three or seven and eight when he took it. This morning it's gone and the stable with it. And not one of the family hear I a word! Another mystery to you on the hundred of them that I'm to prove you all up against. It's getting on my nerves. Makes them poor in living out like Indian summer that's got us all at sea and more rustling right as town — and I have to put everyone on an angle — no horse thief who hasn't left a star. Run up to Heath's place and take a look at things. He wants there is a mark that could be taken as a clue. The horse's hind marks are there on the same — he hasn't had the horse — out of the stable himself for more than a week but that tells nothing. See if you can't dig something up. The brute couldn't fly away.

CHAPTER VI

KIDNAPPING

THIS warning had reference to going to the Sergeant's office and if necessary have the key broken off his clothing. He had with him a small amount of money, having always these trinkets under the coat. It was a sum sufficient to the price of the ticket to Boston. He thought there would be no reason for it to be taken away with the coat, because in the hands of the kidnappers it was no longer of value. Knobeling of course suggested another. It was easier and a large sum of money. The idea of getting it for the kidnappers of the Minister did not bother him, because he knew that it would be better to have no fight with the kidnappers than the regular way of trying to get it.

A visit to Heath's station and a careful examination did nothing to his mind except to add to the others. The stories he heard from the other passengers were always enough. All he has to do was to wait till the end of the day. Knobeling who was quite a nervous man, could not stand the suspense. He thought the longer were those following the direction of his taking off suspending their stay. But all that was of course, of course, more than the fact was not enough enough to drive him to a rapid action where he might err.

With nothing to report, Mather returned to the carriage. There he found a man in a powdered topcoat and a silk bow tie, and an air of quiet confidence.

It was not until he started up again at this time however that in his mind was an intriguing thought. Was it possible that the man of the house was associated with the other in some other than quarrel of heart? Mather. In spite of himself he spent kept his eyes on him, while trying to keep his thoughts from something so out of character. He could not conceive of being engaged in business, but the similar relationship of the two types was evident that the father deserved while the other was not appreciated.

A strange impression that set him. Twice during the day he went out of the street in search of some sort of opportunity or opportunity. And as he wandered along he found himself looking for Bill Peter. Knobeling was constantly on the ball, but a fact it was against visitors that the Inspector

had used Blue Pete most frequently. No one else could follow a trail so surely and successfully; no one else understood beards and the ways of Indians so well. As for that why, shouldn't the half-breeds understand their ways when for years he was one of them?

But even as he sat there eyes open for his half-breed friend Mahon was resistant to all the urging an interview would be. It was not that he had any thought of repeating his appeal for assistance. Ingratitude he longed for even as he shied away from it. Ingratitude. Market he told himself was the one to call, the half-breed to the assistance of the Mounted Police.

The following morning he was called to the Inspector's office and the whole affair of the stealing of the horse was reviewed. Every slant and possibility was examined. Every one of which they could think. Obviously it was not the work of cow-children. Equally obviously professional rustlers were not concerned in such a trifling affair when whole herds of horses had roamed the prairie.

Mahon listened with his mind wandering off on slants of its own. He was brought back to attention by a remark of the Inspector's.

"You know Mahon, I've a hunch it's mixed up somehow with that murderer. He saw the flicker of interest in the Sergeant's eyes. "Ah! So you've had the same thought. Is it possible that North West has been in hiding somewhere here all the time, perhaps - warned by the other Blackfeet - and when the horse at Jerry died down a little he dared to help him?" - the finest horse in town to make his getaway?"

Mahon nodded. "It's been on my mind, sir, but it sounded rather far-fetched. It doesn't seem reasonable either that he'd risk remaining at home so long or that the other Blackfeet would dare help him in hiding him."

"It might have been one way of throwing us off the scent," suggested the Inspector.

"It would strike them as too dangerous, sir. I believe Blackfeet his squaw has gone with him. It would be hard to conceal them both and I can't believe his friends would risk it. I don't think they'll help us to find him. They appear to be backing him as far as they dare, but they wouldn't involve themselves in the murder in that way."

The Inspector considered it. "Perhaps you're right. Just the same I've a funny feeling."

His head jerked forward toward the window. A shadow had passed close beyond the glass.

"Wasn't that an Indian?"

Mahon too had seen it. He had risen and was leaning over the desk. He turned toward the door as the sound of the outer door opening crashed them.

"An Indian at night we be surrounded."

A knock sounded on the door.

The Inspector shivered. Came in?

Constable Priest entered, closed the door behind him, and stood stiffly to attention. An Indian asking to see you sir says he must see you right away. It's One Ear.

"Did he tell you what he wanted?" inquired the Inspector.

"No sir. He keeps demanding to see you, and he's in a hurry."

"Send him in."

The Indian a big bulkling figure clutching a new blanket tightly about him the attire the Indians assumed for business purposes in their dealings with the traders on the transcontinental trail, did through the door and stood with downcast eyes.

The Inspector rose and addressed him cheerfully.

"Come and sit down One Ear. Glad to see any of you any time. Which was not quite the truth.

Mahon knew One Ear fairly well and the Inspector knew enough about him to recall his position in the tribe living in the nearby encampment. He had a better command of English than his fellow or it appeared that was, which amounted to the same thing when outsiders were about. It was an Indian habit to conceal their mastery of the English language, partly to save themselves on humiliating occasions, partly to enable them to pick up useful information from unsuspecting passersby. One Ear had lived for some years in Edmonton and had been in constant association with whites.

He seated himself gingerly on the edge of the chair crooked forward, his eyes still on the floor. The Inspector saw how uneasy he was and started to talk.

"I hope you've come to tell us something more about the murder of Bear Head."

One Ear's face lifted abruptly and he looked the Inspector straight in the eyes. "Last night Little Pine was carried away," he grunted.

Inspector Barker frowned. "What do you mean? Who, or what, is Little Pine and what do you mean by 'carried away'? Do you mean someone's been kidnapped?"

One Ear nodded. "Little Pine belong Flying Eagle. Little girl."

The Indian, nervous hand taken into the Indian manner of speaking English, though he could speak it well.

"You're telling me someone has stolen her from the camp?"

A nod was sufficient reply.

"How old is Little Pine?"

"Six winters have passed since . . ."

"Six years old, eh? That ought to supply things. But at that age she may have wandered away and lost herself. How can you . . ."

"Joe Blue Goose gone too."

"You mean you think Joe Blue Goose took her?"

"Little Pine gone. Joe Blue Goose gone," said the Indian.

"When did this happen?"

"Last night—just dark time."

"If you know the time so well someone must have seen her taken."

One Ear nodded.

"Then you know it was Joe Blue Goose?" declared the Inspector impatiently.

"No sure Big Indian ride from dark, and pick little girl up and ride away up railway."

"Didn't you get after him?" The Inspector turned irritably to Mahon. "They'd use their guns quickly enough for less reason. He tarped back to One Ear. Did you chase after him?"

"Places far away, in Split Tree Ravine."

Inspector Barker frowned at the blotter on his desk. "Do you know any reason why Joe Blue Goose should want to kidnap Little Pine?"

One Ear's head shook vigorously.

"I understand you've had a lot of trouble at the camp since Red Elk died. Has that anything to do with it?"

The Indian shrugged, and spread his hands, then frantically he clutched his blanket more tightly about him—as if a relapse into the white man's gestures had betrayed something. "No sure Joe Blue Goose. Too dark."

"Did he take his pony?"

"Sure posy gone. Not him took Little Pine. Big bronc—ride like devil. Joe Blue Goose not ride like that. Joe Blue Goose not strong enough to pack Little Pine up on the run and not hurt her."

"Hm-m. But there must be some connection," murmured the Inspector. He turned to the Sergeant. "Get out to the encampment with One Ear. Surely you can pick up somethang this time. It looks as if they're more willing to talk. Make enquiries about the relationship between Flying Eagle and Joe Blue Goose. May be a feud of some kind."

One Ear shifted uneasily. "No more to tell. I tell everythang I bring everything." He gripped the blanket more tightly. "He Who Shouts send me to tell it all."

"You'll go with him, Sergeant," insisted the Inspector firmly. He faced One Ear. "We make our own investigations—and you'd better open up and talk. That's all." He waved them from the room.

CHAPTER VII

A HALF-BREED ACTS

IN the darkness Blue Pete turned away from his Mounted Police friend and vanished. Along Fifth Avenue he kept to the deeper shadows. He was thinking heavily. He was unhappy. Sergeant Mahon had piled on his shoulders a responsibility he was reluctant to assume, one that he hated to assume.

He disliked any task that forced him into contact with the Indians—the Neches, as he insultingly termed them. It was not that he feared them, but that he feared that his hatred of them would get him into trouble. Without the Mounted Police, and their regulations to observe, he would have liked nothing better than to undertake a task that would furnish an opportunity to outwit the Neches. Their nature, cruelty, their deceitfulness, their ruthlessness and shocking ways, angered him sometimes beyond control. In dealing with them his inclination was to be as ruthless as they, and that would hurt the Sergeant.

Now he faced the thing he hated most, and there was no escape. Between him and Mahon had grown up a friendship

such as he had never enjoyed with another. The years they had worked together had shown him that the Sergeant was a man to be trusted a man as fearless and determined as himself and no less resourceful. They had worked together on so many difficult and dangerous cases, and had learned to like each other. For the Sergeant Blue Pete would have gone through fire and water without hesitation; many a time they had faced together what looked like certain death.

So that when Mahon threw himself on his friend's mercy there was no escape.

That he would be able to find some way to do what was asked of him the half breed did not doubt. Accordingly, to refuse to do it was tantamount to repudiation of their friendship, a betrayal of the best friend he had ever had. That he could not face.

As he ploughed along he thought it over, not whether he would undertake the task, but how to set about it. That North Wind was in a hiding in the Cypress Hills he knew as he knew that he had never been there since the murder Little Gold happened in that shadowed region without his knowing it.

He decided that the Indian would take refuge in one of the Indian encampments scattered through the foothills of the Rockies, the west. But that helped little since there were scores of such camps the high thousands of square miles of foothills. It would take a year to visit them all. The Beering Indian was a Blackfoot, and the tribes in the foothills were Crees and Piegans and Bloods and Sarcees and here or with few Blackfeet (though latter nowhere that could be longer counted) an Indian of one tribe would do his best to help a member of another tribe against the whites especially against the Mounted Police.

His mind wandered off to his own experience among the foothill Indians.¹ Another visit to the encampments west of Maizon would have a warm welcome but not of a nature to assist him in the task. Mahon wished him to undertake. One visit had ended in full flight before a pursuing band that shot to kill. He could have picked them off one by one, but he had succeeded in the task. Inspector Barker had given him and that was all that mattered.

He remembered, then, that the Sergeant had asked only that he discover where North Wind had gone. After that the

¹ *Blue Pete Said Blue Pete Pays a Debt*

police force was that the Mounted Police might take the heat up themselves. The thought being it might distract.

I think changes were being considered at the time of the last general election, especially by the Conservative party, but I do not know what happened. There was a great deal of talk about the introduction of a new system of proportional representation, but nothing definite was done. The proposal had been dropped.

It was a long night, and it was over. Not far away, on the sand, the bright stars of the moon, like a hundred thousand diamonds, hung in the dark sky. The stars were bright, but the moon was very pale, and the stars were very bright. The stars were very bright, but the moon was very pale. The stars were very bright, but the moon was very pale.

He turned his head up from the book and looked back over the shoulder at his brother again, this time glancing through the dark hair past the face of another young woman in the journal where he was looking. She was wearing a pink dress. A few moments later he turned his head again, this time looking directly at the people sitting around the campfire, smiling broadly.

A year later, in May 1914, he followed the remaining English-speaking members of the Society to the West. The members along the way had been taught that living among English-speaking people was the best way to learn English.

Now comes the Sabbath - the one day given us by God with the other days - the day of rest and divine intermission. His face and features are now more relaxed and reposeful. After a bath he sits and reads his Bibles and the works of the saints and fathers. He is now about forty years old. His features are deeply

He was born at New Haven, Conn., Dec. 20, 1797, and died at New Haven, Oct. 20, 1869, aged 72 years. He was a man of great personal energy and a decided leader among the New Haven Congregationalists. He was a strong pro-slavery man, and his views were known throughout the country. He was a member of the New Haven Theological Seminary, and was a member of the New Haven Congregational Church, and the street was named after him. His son, Dr. George W. Foote, died at New Haven, Conn., June 20, 1869, aged 72 years. From a sketch in the New Haven Register, it appears that he was a man of singular personal strength and energy, and a decided leader in the New Haven Congregational Church.

The back door of the hotel was open and he let himself in.

crept forward along a dimly lighted hall to the lobby and took a key from a hook behind the cuspidor. A man sleeping in a chair beneath the hook did not waken.

Returning to the yard he made for the stable door unlocked it with the key and let himself in.

"Hello ole gal!" he whispered into the darkness.

A low glad whinny was the reply and he picked his way along the wall to the rustling of uneasy hoofs. The whinny, repeated again and again directed him to a stall near the far end where his hand ran affectionately over a small broncho that nuzzled at his shoulder and touched his ear.

"Listen Whiskers," he whispered. "I gotta leave yuh for a while. They'll look after yuh here. If they don't I'll look after them. I got somethin' nasty to do an' yuh can't be in it this time, ole gal."

The answering whinny expressed understanding and disappointment and Blue Pete chuckled.

"Yep, I know han' i nice fer neither of us, but ef they got ther moun' on yuh they'd know I done it an' that ud put me in the coop fer a long time. The Mountain men'st like the way I'm gonna do nowt they ast me t' do an' that ain't no other way I kin see so they'll never know. ~ long ole gal!"

He fumbled at the pony's lips, slapped her rump, and crept back out of the stable. In the hotel lobby he wakened the sleeping man who jerked to his feet hands raised.

Blue Pete laughed. "I ain't in no shootin' mood pes now, Johnny. Keep 'em down."

The old man laughed. "That you, Pete?"

"Shure is."

"Want the pony? The lorry? He saw the empty hook, and his lips fell apart. "Hed, mackerel!"

Blue Pete hung the key back. "I bin out to Whiskers. Yuh was dreamin' yuh was back a top-hand ag'in Johnny. I wudn' a waked yuh fer anythin'. I'm pullin' muh freight fer a few days an' leavin' the pony. Town off down Lethbridge way on the midnight. Take good keer o the ole gal er I'll be talkin' to yuh wen I git back."

"Sure, Pete sure! I'll treat her like she was my own—when I had one."

The half breed pulled a bill from his pocket and thrust it into Johnny's hand. "Long!"

He went out the back way, carefully inspected the street in both directions from the yard gate, and slid swiftly up to

People Average Half a Block along toward the Esplanade the horseman of a sort struck off from his left hand and he darted out at a gallop the horse against Philippe as he went along the sidewalk and before a stable and turned with an effort to the edge of the box. A series of salutes had rendered him numb and he permitted it to knock the horse out the saddle.

The blow on the side of the stable was parried but using a horse-knife he passed the staple loose and let himself down. A good distance away, Philippe had been surprised by a shot and it seemed to come to him. He was not able to realize the situation like at 100 feet. He found the horse lying on the floor. After the fall he saw at last a dozen or more soldiers leap across the street. They were French and in a single moment he and Philippe were outside of the box. Moving from the horses.

Thinking that at the end of 100 feet he reached the 1000 paces and to reach and to meet Philippe Juleson. He had known all the means that made Vergne and Philippe safe. However a suspended weight before an encasing the horse was necessary. Near the Juleson's horses, after the horses had run, he suspended the encasing well on his right shoulder, holding him to it as he did the example. A series of long steps had been taken in the camp for this should itself for a moment but the suspended horse was too a narrow ground in the camp where a thick growth trees covered the enclosure. The ground box it was little more than that of Philippe was bounded to its end with trees and being under an unnumbered roof the horse for a tree and his better way.

He was suspended and situated at the moment that had suddenly come over him. It was not so much physical as mental for the soldier who from the first suggested refuse the job. The moment after he fell out to lie down and not was faced with vision and memory. But the moment he had told as his all he said,

The fact was that he had had the day, for two nights, and in the meantime he had walked from the Cypress Hills to the Bar Y and from there eight miles with them. The day previous he had spent making several preparations for what was sleep had a man been no more than a matter of convenience to him and he had gathered all the food he needed in the saddle on the way back to the camp. Hours of waiting

in the Redlands had pushed west and sleep into an inferior position and even signs of strong Indian and encroaching bear pressure interrupted lack of another mounted. Under direction he had followed his custom of sleeping somewhere he found himself at the most convenient time when in bed at the place he shared with them.

It was a most fresh when he awoke. Strange as his surroundings were there was no tumultuousness in the glen he there about. Always at walking he was patient & spring like action. A lifetime of wandering well enabled the ranger had done that for him. Even while he slept an extra sense seemed to keep watch over him.

With a quick glance at his watch he quickly his estimate of the hour he moved the horse farther into the ravine where the grass was more open and then lay back once more.

This time he did not sleep. While he lay there on the prairie above the town the night before he had formed a plan but now as he reconsidered it he realized the risk of involving so many weaknesses and he was glad that he had taken time to think it over.

After a long time he appeared to have enough to a diversion for he rose examined the fastening of the horse's rein and started slowly away to the entrance to the ravine. There he passed through the trees. Below him the Indians left gradually away to the lower level about the town was built. From where he stood he could see in the distance the Indian station and beyond it the Magedo Pines Ranch. From such a distance it must have been about the only spot where such a clear view was to be obtained for the irregularity of the cut bank was obscuring and by the most part covered with trees and thickets.

He could not see the Indian encampment though he knew it to be within a hundred and fifty yards from where he stood concealed by interlapping trees and thicks. He could hear the dogs barking the pack of dogs that alerts almost every Indian encampment enough had started creatures that had to often made his walk death dangerous. At the sound his teeth seemed to his teeth bared and he fingered his gun suggestively.

Not more important things were before him. Keeping carefully to the cover of the trees he crept out to the more open level ground step by step watching carefully and picking the best cover he advanced toward the camp. Three openings

in the cutbank on his left as he went along he examined before passing to ensure himself against surprise.

At last he lay down behind a thicket where he could look over the camp. The afternoon was waning along and a musing quietness shone in his closed eyes. He had made sure of course that he was alone & not from the dogs. He could see them prancing about foraging for food in every bed that could reach them for they were strictly camp dogs without individual owners.

The life of the camp was beginning to move more timidly with the fading heat of the day. The sun setting above the cutbank far to the west had not the town still packed out over patch and tent in the ugly sagebrush and Blue Pete's nose wrinkled with disgust. He thought that he was raised in such a camp and such sagebrush though his Indian mother had kept him in good repair and clean.

Several Indian boys appeared and squatted in the open sunny space in the heart of the camp. There they would remain until the sun was down and the chill of evening drove their mothers or the more active persons while these squatters忙about preparing the evening meal. Hundreds of children and dogs游ved about the tents.

Blue Pete laid his eyes on the children. Then settled on a girl about six who appeared to direct their games following her wherever she went. Presently a sigh of relief broke from him.

His attention diverted from the little girl to the group of horses then at a distance to the westward side.

In the deepening shadows he gazed nearer and finally shot into a cut in the cutbank. A well tracked path led through unto an open valley and he moved with increasing caution. Before him a bare Indian pony fed and waited at the foot of the slope his head in his hands was the day before. He appeared to be asleep.

Blue Pete regarded him closely for several minutes then with a grin realized he was along the ridge higher up and lay down. It had grown darker and was darker still where the hills screened out the fading sunlight. Blue Pete knew the routine the night herder would feed & care to take over.

The sight dissolved right beside the drowsing Indian he sought a tract of brushwood to the half breed's lair. Carefully he slid down the slope and with a leap landed on the Indian's back shutting off his outcry with one powerful hand. The

Indian struggled madly for a brief minute, but the rope swung over his shoulders and down pinning his arms to his sides.

It had grown too dark to fear recognition so that Blue Pete was really enjoying himself. His free hand found the Indian's neckerchief and he jerked it loose and tied it tightly across the helpless fellow's lips.

In a few seconds the rope was securely knotted. One of the ponies was easily caught and brought to where the Indian lay. As the half breed stooped to raise him a sound from the entrance to the ravine sent him scurrying in that direction. Close to the path he lay down. It was too dark to require other concealment.

An Indian came slouching along the path. He made no sound now yet he had no thought of danger. Blue Pete waited until he was almost in hand then he sprang forward and struck. The blow caught the Indian on the side of the chin and he crumpled to a heap and lay still.

No need to test the effect of the blow and Blue Pete hurried back to his first victim threw him across the pony and led him from the ravine.

Back where he had left his own brother, rather, the one he had stolen, he dropped the Indian led the pony farther into the ravine and tied it securely.

By the time he rode into the open the Indian encampment was settling down for the night. The children were still abroad, impelling a greater share of amusement into the few remaining minutes of the day. But the little girl was no longer in sight. Furious, disappointed and temporarily defeated, Blue Pete scanned the encampment to find her. Suddenly she shot from a wigwam.

He had dismounted but his horse he was only a few yards away and he hurriedly mounted. With a tingle of elation that at last the time for action had arrived he struck spurs into his mount and dashed straight for the camp.

The dogs heard him first and an excited barking arose. The Indians stopped their games as his moving form came into sight in the indistinct light. Blue Pete raced toward them. They scattered at the last moment all except the little girl. She stood her ground almost with defiance. Here and there older Indians appeared at the tent flaps.

The half breed swept forward raced close to the girl, reached down and swept her up before him.

Sounds of fear and excitement rang out as he tore away toward the railway track. The thrill of success surged through him, and his lips opened for the triumphant "Yip-ee" that marked his moments of unusual elation. But he managed to choke it off in time. That cry would have betrayed him.

Up the railway track he raced. His bronchos sure-footed, did not stumble on the uneven ties. Reaching the top, the half-breed set off straight to the south. There thirty miles away in the Cypress Hills, he knew he would be safe from pursuit.

CHAPTER VIII

INFORMATION

SERGEANT MAHON visited the camp. He had not gone immediately with One Ear. A word or two from the Inspector, before he had time to leave the barracks, altered the plan. Instead, he had gone once more to the stable from which the horse had been stolen. There he carefully took the measurements of the hoof marks, noting every peculiarity. He was glad of the change of orders, for he had something to satisfy in his own mind, and he might need all the information he could get.

On his way back to the barracks he turned into the Royal Hotel yard. A trio of cowboys from the T-Inverted-R were mounting their bronchos to start on the long ride to the ranch, and they greeted him with simulated terror edging their mounts away from him. One contended that he "ain't done nothin' except guzzle all the Royal's best booze."

A companion gave the jest more point by snarling "Yu sure did, Hicky—an' we paid for it."

The third puncher siddled his horse up to the Sergeant. "Heard yo got rustlers right here in town, Sarge. Was it from the barracks they stole? If ya don't mind keep 'em in town. But what the hell does anybody need a cayuse in town for, anyways? If you'd ast me I'd say somebody's pulin' yer leg—tryin' to git the Mounties an' the street cops fightin'. Got the rustler yet, Sarge?"

"I've a fair idea about him, Jim," replied Mahon. "But we're in no hurry. We're waiting till he gets out of town. Anyway, it was a young broncho, it'll live till we get it back."

They bade him good-night and rode at a racing speed into the street. Mahon stood for a time staring at the open gate, wondering if there might not be something in the cowboy's suggestion. He wished the thought encouraged it, for something less pleasant kept intruding into his mind.

Presently he moved on and entered the stable.

Later he strolled through the back door into the hotel. A bartender saw him from the bar as he passed along the hallway and hurried after him.

"Lookin' for anybody, Sergeant?"

Mahon leaned against the counter on which lay the register, and carelessly turned the leaves.

"Ain't seen 'em the last couple of days. Reddy?"

"Half a dozen punchers. Mostly they don't register. By the time they get this far they're too drunk to write their names. Anything wrong?"

"Nothing just looking around. Stable emptier than usual I see. You've got Blue Pete's pinto out there. Where's the breed?"

Reddy shrugged. "Say, you folks sure keep your eyes on him eh? Well I don't blame you. Dashed if he doesn't always give me the feeling he's going to hit the high spots any moment and the rest of us must duck under the tables. And then dashed if he doesn't fool me. What gets me is the way he manages to keep within the law. But it's probably Indian running and good common sense the last comes from him what father's side. Dangerous -hapa breeds, though. I always say 'Never know what they're going to do.'

"Is he in town?" Mahon enquired still.

Reddy shook his head. "Johns tells me he come in a couple of nights ago and said to look after the pinto. He was clearing out for a few days down Lethbridge way. Ain't seen him since." He shot a glance about the room and leaned nearer to whisper in a hoarse voice. "Want him for anything?"

The Sergeant waved an indifferent hand. "Oh no. I found his bronchos, but I hadn't seen the half-breed since—oh a couple of days ago. I wondered what had happened to him that's all. Well I'll toddle along." He started for the door.

"Will I tell him you want him badly?" grunted Reddy.

"Tell him what you like—so long as it's the truth," replied Mahon gravely.

BLUF PETE'S DILEMMA

Instead of leaving by the front door he changed his mind as he reached it turned back and went out through the back door to Main Street. The Inspector never missed anything that happened on South Madison Street and Mahon had no wish to have junctions that might drag him some show of the day what he felt concerning his half breed friend.

"What in the world does it mean?" he asked himself as he crossed the railway track toward the barracks. Is it another crazy mess he's getting himself into? Whatever it is, it means trouble for us. I wonder if he's finding out and how he's doing it. I don't like it.

He reported to the Inspector and next day set out for the Indian encampment.

What he found there to add to what One Ear had reported was of little consequence. He Who Shoots did not appear and only the fat would talk. In fact only a few of the older Indians seemed to be in the camp in addition to One Ear, but Mahon knew that was arranged. The experience of the second Indian Blue Pete had knocked shucks out was not mentioned. Joe Blue Green the Indian the half breed had trusted us had been found. He could tell little.

Mahon felt depressed and defeated but it was only in part due to his failure in over anything of value. Indeed the Inspector's irritability growing day by day affected him little in the interviews that followed. But when the next day his superior got down to directing his mind to the problem he hastened.

There's a damned sight more to this than we see on the surface Mahon and no one knows it better than you.

Mahon flushed guiltily. I think you're right sir. I've been wondering a lot. I'm convinced the Indians are far from frank yet they want our help in some way.

Do you think there's any connection between the murder and the kidnapping?"

Mahon's eyes fell. I can't work out what connection there could be sir. They involve the same camp that's all."

The Inspector's head shook irritably. We must do something pretty soon. The trail is getting colder all the time. Suddenly he looked straight into Mahon's face. "Strike me this is the perfect place to bring Blue Pete in.

You mean about the murder or the kidnapping?"

I'm connecting them. He could do things there that we couldn't hope to do. If nothing turns up within the next

couple of days I'm going to call him in. It he'll take it on, of course."

Mahon left as soon as he could and that night he slept little. What he had discovered or suspected from his discoveries worried him the more because he could not understand. He was unrefreshed and irritable.

Torrier has paid a visit he took a walk along the Esplanade. He had almost reached the end of the street when an excited man burst from a door and leaped down the verandah steps, shouting to him. The sergeant's heart almost stopped beating, for it was Heath, the owner of the stolen horse.

"Hey, sergeant! wait! He's back, he's back! Fairway's back in the stable!"

"You mean your horse has been found?" asked Mahon, wondering why he felt so relieved.

"I found nothing. He was in the stable this morning when I happened to go out. Would you believe it there he was, saddle in its place on the peg and everything. And Fairway's in fine shape seems almost to have enjoyed a holiday or something. I haven't been dreaming have I? Hell it makes me feel like a fool."

Mahon tried to laugh. "At least you're a lucky fool. I can wish for it that the horse was not there day before yesterday. Perhaps the rustler was disappointed in Fairway, and didn't think him worth his trouble."

"Well," laughed Heath, perhaps he isn't all I've cracked him up to be but I'm satisfied to have him back to feed, and no questions asked. "Gerry I bothered the Mounties."

"It's our job," said Mahon absentmindedly and walked away.

He made directly for the barracks. The Inspector had been telephoned the news and was thinking it over.

"What in blazes do you make of it, Mahon? It's damned mysterious and aggravating. Who'd steal a horse and then return it in a few days? And a good horse it is, too. Perhaps we've only been dreaming there's a murder, too. I hope so. I suppose there's nothing more for us to do now—about the horse I mean. We've enough to do without trying to run down burglars. Heath isn't complaining. He threw up his hands. "It's a new sort of mope. Affects me like like some of the twisted stunts Blue Pete puts on for us." His eyes brightened. "You don't think he had anything to do with it, do you?"

Mahon was prepared. Why should he be mixed up in it all?"

"Well, it solves one problem in a way. But we still have to find that North West and the papers that was kidnapped, and I'm not going to wait much longer to get action from Rose Pete. He's had nothing to do since he got back from the Badlands. He might take a job. Anyway, we'll try him. Has he been in town lately?"

Mahon admitted reluctantly that he had seen the half-breed a few days before. "I think you can arrest him again, I don't think he's gone back to the ranch yet."

"You mean . . . or you may not," said the Inspector. "And if you have to go out to the trail, you aren't going to come across him there either. If he knows we want him, he's heavier than a flea. But we must get hold of him. Find out if he's in town, or if anyone knows where he is. Otherwise we will have to ride out and either see him or tell Mac to have him in jail. He frequents at the blotters before him."

"I'm afraid we're riding out there so often people will begin to suspect how we use him."

Mahon concluded the conversation with Meddy, the bartender at the Hotel. It doesn't look as if they suspect us yet, sir." He repeated the conversation in part, omitting any mention of the trip Rose Pete had mentioned.

The Inspector nodded his satisfaction. "That's fine. Once they know he's working for us we'll have to drop him again and you know what that will mean to him and to us. We'll get along out and make enquiries."

The enquiries had not even started when Whistlers came loping along beside Mahon on Fourth Avenue and stopped. They were madmen between the two newspaper offices before a vacant lot so that no one could get near enough to over hear.

Mahon placed a hand on the pony's neck and whistled at him, looking sympathetically into the half-breed's face. "Pete," he said, "you're on the way to a lot of trouble again."

Rose Pete grunted unashamed. "Ain't Heath found that cause o' his yet?"

"He has. And only you and I know where it was. No, I never told and I know who took it."

"Anyways, he's back and he's as nobody here!"

Under its Little Star. He looked keenly into the half-breed's glittering eyes.

"She s— she's back too. I didn't hurt her none."

"You kidnapped her. Do you know what the penalty is?"

"I had to do it. Yuh put it . . ."

"There's a little matter too," Mahon interrupted, "of an Indian trussed up and left where he wasn't found for more than a day."

"He wasn't hurt none neither," said Blue Pete, with a grin. "Yuh put it up to me to find out what North Wind is, and that wasn't no other way I could see. I was yes down wot yuh ast me to do."

"Do you mean you found out what we want?" demanded the Sergeant.

Blue Pete looked away over the buildings and rubbed his chin. "But lil papoose's a mighty smart lad. I didn't borner that heas fer nothing. I couda used Whiskers, but anybody'd recognize her."

"Was you stide the horse to help you to kidnap Little Pine? That's just knock. The Inspector'll tell you how clever."

A look of consternation came over Blue Pete's face. "Yuh won't tell th Inspector wif yuh sergeant? I didn't hurt nobody, not bad an I got not yuh wanted -party near."

"You mean you know where North Wind is?"

"I know whar he started fer—with his squaw. Tha're a dang long way away by this time. Now yuh kin git after 'em yerself."

"But Pete, we were thinking . . ." Mahon stopped. This was no time or place to break the news that the Inspector expected the half-breed to take up the chase. The Inspector will have to know what you have to tell. You needn't mention how you got the information and I won't, though it's another tune when I have to break my vows for you. Come down to the barracks and talk it over."

Blue Pete's face lengthened. I ain't much fer lyin', Sergeant. I don't like talkin' to th Inspector wen I gotta lie. He albus seems to know."

"You won't need to lie. I don't think he'll press to find out where you learned what you have to tell. Come down with me now, openly. Everyone thinks we're just keeping track of you after the record you have."

They turned back down Main Street, and reached the barracks. A few saw them, Blue Pete riding the pony with a dejected look of guilty embarrassment. It surprised no one, aroused no suspicion of the real nature of the visit.

Blue Pete's lawlessness was a byword. Everyone knew that his early life had been filled with rustling that he had fled to Canada before the guns of avenging ranchers and cowboys, that he had worked for a time with the Mounted Police,¹ but had returned to rustling when a thoughtless judge had refused to accept the expert evidence of a former rustler. After that he had returned and the public thought the Mounted Police had been unable to collect sufficient evidence to convict him, and had let him alone, merely keeping a close eye on him. That he had ever since acted as a detective for them no one suspected.

Before the barracks he dismounted, dropped the loose reins to the ground and entered after Mahon. The few who saw smiled significantly and forgot. It was as the Inspector wished.

CHAPTER IX

MIS-JOB

FROM beyond his window in the barracks Inspector Barker saw the half-breed and the Sergeant the moment they appeared around the corner from Fourth Avenue, and a smile of satisfaction creased his face. It boded well for his plans that Blue Pete appeared to come willingly. No one, he admitted to himself, could get his way with the half-breed as could Sergeant Mahon, it was one of the things he held to the credit of his subordinate.

Between the half-breed and the Inspector a curious relationship had developed. They liked and respected each other, though, as the latter always remarked at the end of a case the former had carried through, the half-breed's unconventional methods were responsible for much of his grey hair.

Never had he been able to effect any change in those methods. With a goal in view, Blue Pete set about reaching it in his own way. It was either the only way he could envisage, or the shortest route to the desired end. That route, he maintained, was his business alone, the end the Inspector's sole concern. The trouble from the official point of view, was that the Inspector was forced to recognize the fact that Blue Pete's methods were the only ones that would have

¹ Blue Pete Half-breed. Blue Pete Detective.

succeeded, largely because the only cases given him were, or promised to be, beyond the capacity of the Mounted Police.

The Inspector had come to rely on his unofficial assistant. As yet Blue Pete had never failed to do what he set out to do, with the qualification that sometimes it was not the complete job the Inspector wished. The capture of a criminal, with the law to set the punishment, is the legal way to handle a crime. To Blue Pete it appeared sufficient sometimes, to put the criminal beyond repeating the crime.

Pressing the bell beneath his desk the Inspector gave orders that Mahon and Blue Pete should be admitted immediately to his office. To hasten the meeting he even left his office door open.

At a sign from Constable Priest Mahon ushered his companion into the office, and followed. The Inspector greeted the half breed with unusual courtesy, grasping his hand and wringing it. It was difficult for him to assume such a pose. Thirty years of Mounted Police duty in the Canadian West had made life too serious for smiles.

"Glad to see you, Pete. Set down and light up."

He had taken care to spill some of his—and Blue Pete's—favourite tobacco from his pouch on the blotter and the half-breed did not hesitate. To fill his corn cob pipe from the Inspector's special brand almost made an interview worth while.

"You haven't been in to see me since—since you got back," the Inspector complained. "I thought we parted friends out there south of the Hills."

The half breed pressed the ball of a huge thumb into the bowl of his pipe and struck a match under the edge of the desk.

"Shure shure." He drew the flame unto the bowl. "Bin pretty busy."

The Inspector made a sound of disbelief. "Don't tell me that. The 3-Bar-Y runs without you like a clock. No one out there depends on you. Even Mira has learned that she must do without you now and then. In Texas you've got the best foreman in the West—and, as a punch, Mira can ride herd with any cowboy. You needn't tell me you need a bed to sleep in, either, you've slept on the ground far more times than you ever saw a bed."

*Blue Pete Ondow

48 ELITE PETE'S DILEMMA

I been down to the Hills, muttered the half-breed.

"Of course you couldn't stay away from the Hills long," laughed the Inspector. "Sergeant Malvo tells me he saw you there. Thanks for referring our minds about North Wind hidin' there. We'd still be combing the Hills. I suppose if you hadn't assured us he hasn't been there since the murder."

Malvo stepped forward. "Pete tells me he knows where North Wind has gone."

The Inspector's manner instantly became belligerent. "Is that so? Good! I didn't know he was on that job already."

Both Malvo and Blue Pete dropped their eyes before the keen eyes of the older man.

He happened to get back o' the information," said Malvo.

"Knocked some poor Indian on the head to get it. I suppose (Oh well I'm not asking questions so long as he can help us). He turned back to the desk. "Him-m! A few minutes ago I found out something myself. That little Indian girl is back. She's unharmed—and she refuses to talk. She won't tell what happened to her. One bar had someone telephone about it; he doesn't wish to face us again. Him-m! Strange coincidence! It would make an interesting study to trace the connection. But we've other things to do—just yet."

His perceiving eyes moved from the half-breed to the Sergeant; the corners of his lips twitched. They're both back whole so I'm letting it drop. And Little Pine is a clever girl. Him-m!"

Blue Pete squinted at the board of his pipe, one crooked eye closed. "Some o' them Neche kids is smart."

Him-m! I'd say in this case her kidnapper was smart—or Little Pine would remember and talk. However this is wasting time. With that cleared up somewhat we face the bigger task. Where is North Wind? You say you know?"

Gone north an' west," said Blue Pete.

"Where?"

Purts Martin to be out that among them Neches in the foothills west o' Red Deer. Lots o' them that Crees an' Stonys, most of 'em."

You appear to know the district. When were you there?

Never was ther Jus' that I gotta know either bout the Neches. I run up ag'in' em too often to forget not. I hear 'bout 'em."

"In that case said the Inspector more ingratiatingly leaning forward and placing a hand on the dark one that lay on the desk, you're just the man we want. North Wind is a new breed and the Mounted Police must punish murderer. And I assure almost one of us. That Indian is far out of bounds for me—Pete. But North Wind is no job and no one else's. However if I gave it over to someone who knows nothing about him and the Blackfeet he'd be sure to snuff it or make the place last for years. Will you undertake it, Pete—for me?"

A slow smile spread over Blue Pete's face. "Well the trouble anyway. Ain't it best to let the hell each other off an' let it go at that?"

The Inspector assumed an expression of shocked surprise. "Pete, the law doesn't recognize that sort of thing and I am here to uphold the law. Not by inserting with a strong hand that the idea hasn't got points. But look at it this way. When we get North Wind it'll be another Indian out of the way. A murderer goes with his life. It was diplomacy as the Inspector seldom used it but he was willing to take almost any course to ensure the half breed's assistance.

Blue Pete rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Well at a thousand I know you all number in. Miss will write thanking me for some time later for the rest. The rest."

But if you refuse this job she'll see little of you anyway for you're nothing at home. She's used to it. Perhaps she thinks more of you because you're young & so no problem."

Blue Pete was interested. "You know Inspector maybe you're right that I often wondered why I can't see no other reason. See the same. got North Wind down here sooner or later I'll look after him."

If we had him down here we'd look after him ourselves. Look here Pete you've been back around the ranch for a month and you know you've got to be kept busy or you'll get into trouble. I

I got into the most trouble when I'm busy, you say?"

The Inspector smiled an apologetic kind. "But this is exactly the sort of job you like."

That the half breed was tempted was evident from the sober look on his face. He slouched forward in the chair staring at the floor. "Whatcha want me to do—about him for you?"

"I never said that you're not to shoot at all
less of course you must in self-defense."

"Who tells me when I gotta shoot or be shot?"

The corners of the Inspector's lips twitched. North Wind is a deadly shot I'm told. You must keep that in mind of course. If you can't bring him in without killing him well it would put me in a nasty position. I'd have to expelate you. I'd have to say I had nothing to do with you. He isn't going to be taken easily but I also know what you can do. In this case I want you to do it."

"Want me to bring him in?"

Inspector Barker remembered another occasion when Blue Pete had brought in a criminal and the occasion was an embarrassing one. The half breed had pursued a masher across the border into Montana had traced him up and brought him back into Canada and up to Medicine Hat. And the Inspector had been forced to let the fellow go glad to have him clear out with no further trouble. Blue Pete had never understood had never forgivin' or forgiven.

The Inspector cleared his throat. I have no way of knowing what the occasion may demand. What concerns me is that North Wind is a murderer and I've got to get him."

"A dog lives rough as I do. not much an' that won't be no more trouble for anybody" suggested Blue Pete.

Punishment is not for you Pete. Remember that just as you remember that North Wind is dangerous.

I ain't apt to forget it. But this is September an' the winter starts early out there. It's mighty gush to carry on into the winter an' I know the winters in the foothills. The Sergeant in me does an' North Wind is farther north than the winters is wide.

You'll have to face that of course. But winter has no threat for you. Don't make foolish excuses. You can set out right away if you're sure of your information. Perhaps the Neches have pulled your leg.

Blue Pete rose and tapped his pipe empty on the edge of the desk. I'm bankin' on it he said. I won't waste time goin' of I didn't. I'll fix it up th' Mira an' maybe beat the winter."

The Inspector's eyes gleamed with satisfaction. Blue Pete slowly filled his pipe once more from the scattered tobacco, and without another word started for the door.

"Good luck," called the Inspector "and good hunting!"

For answer the half breed's hand slid into his chaps and a revolver appeared. It slipped into the air and landed in the position to be of most service.

The door closed behind him. Inspector Harker groaned. "And that," he sighed, "is the start of another headache."

CHAPTER X

TRouble Starts Early

RED DEER half way between Calgary and Edmonton is a town of some importance in the Canadian West. It is the largest town between Alberta's two cities, and it centres a good farming district.

Situated on the Red Deer River it has attained some fame from the fossil remains discovered on the river banks.

Far to the west about one hundred miles away lie the Rocky Mountains, the land between irregularly cultivated and sparsely inhabited. The first real life to the west is found in the Indian encampments scattered through the foothills a profitable certainly satisfactory centre for trapping and hunting. It was among these encampments that Blue Pete decided his work lay. Little Pine had kept her ears open, and to the half breed she had opened her lips.

The train landed him at the small station in the early morning and until the town awakened he dozed in the waiting room. In the pack sack he carried was all he needed for a trip of almost any duration. All his life he had felt well equipped with nothing more than two revolvers, a .45 and a $\frac{3}{8}$ a rifle and his pony Whiskers. What he needed from day to day he helped himself to as he went along.

But as he looked down on the brown waterproof bag he carried he wondered, and twinges of misgiving made him uneasy.

He loathed one particular place. He hated the mountains. He had worked amidst these terrifying peaks for the Mounted Police on one occasion and the experience had left memories he would gladly have forgotten! After a lifetime on the prairie or amid heights no more unimpressive than those of the

¹ Blue Pete, Detective.

Montana Redheads and the Indians (both the towering peaks of the Rockies and the two tribes of men made him feel safe) and unopposed he was efficient.

A week after his assignments had taken him to the last hills in the south and far from Montana, and over there he had been unhappy. Now as he started off the tracks, he had a sense within that gave him no peace or prepared him for what may come before after leaving Montana. He

left the train tracks, he took his stated walk on the main road leading the bend of the street. Three milk wagons followed one another along the platform and tracks from a pair of cars through it and then came a few houses where he set his feet. He saw him but he did not know it was a man who had disappeared off the platform the night before.

The station master's office door had remained open somewhat for the night but Indians were not unusual about the town and that was the time he had disappeared. He resembled an Indian sufficiently well to pass for one and in truth he was a chief, though he did not know it.

As he walked up on the street a group of four Indians crossed the sidewalk some distance away and disappeared before a store whose front had just opened.

He was interested though he could not have told why. Perhaps it was that it was unusual for Indians to quarrel with a white man, perhaps he saw in them men he might meet again in the course of his work. Thus he entered the store the others remaining on their hands free outside. There situation he sensed there were a friendlyly open but fast and powerful. Presently the one who had vanished made an effort with a purse which he presented to divide among his companions.

Rue Pote hurried from the station and along the platform, taking cover behind the telegraph where he was nearer the Indians. He saw a cleavage and disappeared up the street where the Indians had been.

The last heard was unwise. There was something strange about it all but he could not imagine why he thought so and he berated himself.

Constitutive Pote he grunted under all but up at least reasonable. Which night was shared best option. First thing you know will be chosen for the tree so that won't help you know what you're given. What you're given them Noches'll know every dark tree as you gotta have.

He parked up the park-sack and set out along the street. Not a movement, not an open door, escaped him as he passed along. Without admitting it even to himself he was looking for the Indians.

The door of the store where they had made the purchase stood wide open and on the spur of the moment he crossed to it and entered. A couple of early customers were being served by an old man who looked up as he entered and grinned.

"Forgot something?" he asked. "You couldn't want any more 45's you got all I had, anyway. You—Oh I see you ain't the one I sold 'em to a few minutes ago."

Blue Pete pointed to a brightly coloured handkerchief on a string over the counter.

"How much?"

"Like that? It'll be thirty-five cents."

The half breed rummaged in his pocket and produced the money took the handkerchief from the line and left the store.

He felt hurted but could not imagine why. "In the box the Indian had broken open and shared with his companions was filled with 45's." There'd be a lot of shooting in that box—a lot of shooting—a lot of shooting.

A sign over a building caught his eye and he turned into the wide doorway beneath. The familiar horsey odour of a livery stable he whiffed almost rapturously. A man emerged from a small office just inside the door and stopped at sight of his visitor. It was plain that he did not relish dealing with an Indian.

Blue Pete paid no attention but continued back along the rear of the stalls, his eyes fixed on the row of rumps. The livery-stable proprietor set out after him.

"Want anything?" he asked.

Blue Pete stopped behind a horse that had turned to whinny at him. He slid into the stall, running a hand over the rump and down a leg.

"Want horse," he grunted, pointing.

The liveryman laughed. "I don't let my horses out to Indians. No offence, but that's my rule."

"I boy" jerked the half breed. He was playing the Indian rôle well.

The man's head shook. "You've landed on the best I've got. I don't wish to sell. What do you want to buy a broncho here for, anyway? I thought you Indians helped yourselves

to them in the open. There are wild ones off toward the foothills, they tell me."

"This town's probably far away," said Billie Peter.
"Yes, that's true."

Billie Peter pulled a roll of bills from his pocket. "How much?"

"Have you a saddle?"

"Buy saddle too."

The man hid a note of surprise. This is worth business. You must be pretty fresh judging by that all. Been robbing a bank?"

"They have an saddle," snapped Billie Peter.

"Well, I'll lend you a hundred for the horse and saddle."

I pay." Billie Peter sorted out the amount and held it out. The man in seized the money with hating eyes.

"By gosh, I don't think you Indians ever made a deal without a lot o' bargaining. I've lived on Red River for eighteen years but I'm still learning I see." He waved a hand at a row of saddles hung on wooden pegs against the wall. "Take your pick."

Billie Peter walked straight to one of the saddles, entered the stall, untied the horse he had selected and buckled the saddle over its back. The presents owner held out a bridle and in a moment Billie Peter was on the saddle.

As he started into gear a sharp report rebounded through the stable from somewhere on the street. The overseer whistled.

"That isn't so bad after all," he said. "Some wild Indian I guess. But we don't have much." He took out.

He leaped aside as Billie Peter struck spurs at the horse and dashed through the corral door. In a flash he understood why he has felt no one else since seeing those two Indians.

As he riding full speed out the street he was forced to draw in savagely to avoid a collision with another riding horse. His own mount reared back to hasten within a few inches of an Indian herd low over his mount as he dashed past. A shot rang out from a building almost across the street then another.

Too much was happening at once for Billie Peter to take it all in. His first thought was to duck the bullet fired at him by the racing Indian; then he saw three more bearing toward him from before the building from which the shots had come. A few others were clanking hot over and a second gun opened fire from a window opposite the building.

But the oncoming Indians appeared untroubled.

Pete's eyes caught the sign over the building from which the first shot had come. It was a bank.

The three Indians were already on horseback, each carried a gun and the three guns pointed at him. In a moment he quicked the eye to reveal his man as was out and flying from the bay. And with each shot an Indian staggered from the saddle and dropped into the street.

One of Indians handled a gun but aiming at him. Pete slid to the other side of his mount and fired over the saddle. He was too late to stop the bullet that came tearing through his sleeve, but his own bullet struck the Indian in the centre of the forehead.

In the meantime the town was aroused and bullets were flying about him. He remembered the Indian who had captured the one who had challenged him first and had fired at him and his anger flared. Whirling his revolver about in a shower of bullets he set out in pursuit.

He had no more than cleared the town where he realized the man who had got himself. He had shot and killed three men. They had plainly tried to rob the bank and had earned what they got, but that would not help in leaving him free to continue the job he had undertaken for the Inspector. Indeed some such thought a man of reputable citizens would probably swear that he was one of the robbers. His first move therefore was to get rid of the man. The anger that had over come him at the memory of the plot, the first Indian had taken at him avenged for the moment and he concluded the best way to do so.

He was bound to avoid the path the street round the river and as he thundered over the bridge he could still hear shouting behind him. There would be no active chase however until the Mounted Police were on the trail. It would leave him ample time to make his escape.

He recalled then that the three Indians he had shot had carried arms bags. They would obtain the money they had stolen. The one who had captured had probably been left as a lookout and had turned tail at the first sign of danger. As well the steamer was safe. The Inspector would consider him when he home. He would be taking the law in his own hands was the thought the Inspector reprimanded him for most consistently. At any rate he was safe for the time being and no one had had time to recognize him.

He remembered the liveryman. Would he offer an alibi? The answer was in the negative. To the whole town, and to the liveryman, the presence of a stranger in the stable would merely be a move to keep the liveryman from his front office, where he would have seen what was going on across the street.

There was one thing about it that puzzled him. Indians, in his experience, were not bank-robbers. Their most desperate crimes, in these days, were waylaying stages or pay-carts, or robbing ranch-houses and herds. Strange Indians, those, desperate fellows. And one remained alive to remember his intervention.

Later the half-breed was to know how important that was. For an Indian never forgets.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLIZZARD

FOR four miles he followed the road north at top speed. The country was rolling, so that for most of the time he was out of sight of any impulsive person who might have taken up the trail. In a hollow he turned from the road and struck across the open prairie. He had seen several farm houses as he tore along but where he was now not a building was in sight. All the way along the depression was no sign of anything man had done except two fences. In one he found a gate, the wire of the other he wrenched loose and held down to let his broncho pass.

After a long time he knew that he had passed the farms. Even from a height he could see no buildings, and the fences had long since disappeared. Before him lay open prairie, more broken than about Medicine Hat. Far away to the west he could dimly see the mountains and a shudder ran through him. They were many miles away still but in the clear air he could discern three snowy peaks.

He rode on. And presently a feeling of elation coursed through him. He had had the excitement his nature craved, it promised more excitement to come, and that was what he lived for—yes, even if he found it on the hated mountains before him.

The trouble he had purchased, there was all he had thought it. It was fast and powerful and tempestuous with an east gale and a north wind that obliged Budget and startle dog to do.

Unconscious of the fact the animal grazed where he ate nothing from his upland. The house he remained near had its government was the other factor in his safety.

That night he slept in the open beneath a half dead tree beside a stream and a precipice, and without a breath. His life he had, he said, grazed at a tank and rested.

In the early morning he set out again, always westward. The day was clear, the weathering over as he rode he kept examining the sky with interest. He knew the period of the month, the Moon's last quarter was at the instant about a half an hour before noon. It ought to remain late September and setting for a month and more the real winter. He had enough to be satisfied the spot he took a storm for of might happen the snow would fall. He could look after himself but for the blizzard he must beg a shelter or a shelter.

He took more caution as the hours passed though he could tell longer by sight the position of the sun against a of the earlier houses in town and there was nothing nearer.

The day turned threatening, the wind rose. In the north west it was light now and though he expected the blizzard nothing so unfeigned the sky grew apprehensive something a strange attraction. He looked about for what shelter than the shelter of the land provided. At the house he had often taken shelter in the lee of a hill and set the snow blow over him but that would not do for his horse. A hill might suffice but there was none in sight. Nevertheless he pushed on.

The vegetation had disappeared beneath the howling blizzard but he knew he should reach the foothills the next day. He had not found his mount earlier save there appeared no reason for it. Besides he was short beneath the snow immensely fresh and keen. He had to know what might have been there.

The wind increased more still. A snowdrift struck his back like a small tree. It was followed by others on a gust of wind. A snowdrift after one crested and he careered himself fearfully on the saddle. He took a wet book about him before the storm began. From the north west a wall of drifts white was moving toward him.

His glasses toward the horizon and off to the west-southwest something he saw drew a quick breath from him. Head

instant his heels flew sharply into the flanks of his surprised mount and he was off toward it at top speed. Over his shoulder he could hear the storm overtaking him and the wind whistled through his horse's tail. He crossed over the hills and urged it on.

Then the storm struck. It blinded him. The broncho fought to turn his back to the wind but Blue Pete jerked him around and kept on. He knew he must be almost there but he could see nothing. Or had the bronco so intent in steering away? In such a blinding storm he might pass within a few feet of the building he had seen and be unaware of it.

Suddenly through the blanket a thin light shone before him and he tried to pull in time to avoid crashing into an adobe wall. He sheered. A man came and stood beyond the glass gazing through at him a bearded Indian with a wild look in his eyes. He vanished and a door opened noiselessly somewhere. A voice shouted to him.

This was stranger and damned welcome.

Blue Pete rounded the corner. Light streamed from an open doorway and in the bright ribbon stood the man he had seen at the window.

God it's good to see someone especially on a day like this. The man grasped the half-breed's hand and clung to it with both his own.

Blue Pete climbed from the saddle. What'll I put him? he asked, pointing a thumb toward the broncho.

Come right in. I'll look after the bronco. This is my lucky day for sure. You're the second and I haven't seen a living soul since I visited the boys two weeks ago.

They went together to a red stable at the back. It was comfortable enough and there was another horse and plenty of grass.

The door of the hut closed them into a new world. Blue Pete looked about with frank surprise and approval. There was a stove with a pile of wood beside it, two easy chairs, a bed and two tables. One of the tables was piled with books.

The owner laughed as he noticed his visitor's surprise. "I do the best I can for myself," he said. "It's a pretty lonesome life on a sheep ranch. But today I've had a busy day with visitors. Another Indian went through this morning. Spend the night with me. Haven't seen more than half a dozen Indians all told in the last couple of years, either been out to Calgary, he said. Going to one of the camps.

in the foothills, I suppose I don't ask. He wouldn't talk much but none of you do eh? Oh well it's enough to have you around it keeps my English up to do a bit of talking now and then.

I'm running sheep you know. Haven't got nearer towns, or the Farmers and the ranchers would be down on me. I've two hundred out on the range now. I'm worried about them and the sheep but they're great shape with sheep and we usually pull through. A breed brings in my supplies once a month and sometimes often. I could do with another. I'd take an Indian even."

He grinned sheepishly. There I go always putting my foot in it. I talk too fast to think when I get a chance. There are Indians and Indians just as there are whites and whites. I can tell by your looks you've got intelligence.

He stopped abruptly and studied his visitor with wrinkled forehead. "Where are you from and where are you making for?"

"Camp in foothills," replied Blue Pete. "Cree—friends. You're not a Cree."

Pagan from down south."

Strange the Indians I've seen of late. Couple of them a couple of weeks ago an Indian and his pretty squaw. The quietest pair I ever had here. She never so much as opened her mouth except to eat and he asked only a question or two. They seemed in a hurry to get on. I gave them some flour and salt. Travelling light they were. Funny to get supplies from me when they came from where my supplies come from. If they'd been whites I'd say they were sloping.

Blue Pete listened to every word. Friend come that way with squaw he said. "Big man."

Might be him, sure s' you're living said the sheepman excitedly. How isn't that a coincidence? Ain't it a fact that it's a small world? He threw a glance about the narrow walls of the hut. And to think I run up against it away off here a hundred miles from nowhere. They don't stay more'n a few minutes. The squaw was a good-looker for an Indian I mean he added hurriedly. Lots of braves are handsome fellows."

He leaned forward in a friendly way, and laid a hand on Blue Pete's knee. "Just to think what can happen to a fellow away off here! You'll be running across him out there, I suppose."

"Share hope so," replied Blue Pete.

"Well, tell them to drop in and spend a day or two with me on their way back." He winked. "And if he wants to leave the squaw with me I'll look after her. She looked as if she might have a roving eye. I didn't encourage her. I'm not taking chances with Indians." He reddened with embarrassment. "I mean, I don't pretend to know much about them, so I might easily do the wrong thing. Listen to that wind. You're damned lucky you struck this place when you did. There isn't another scratch of shelter this side the foothills. A few trees about thirty miles west in the ravines, I mean. After that you'll be safe enough." He rose and went to the stove. "Well, let's eat. Sort of cosy with company, and I do talk. . . . I'm beginning to think I'll need a traffic cop soon."

CHAPTER XII

WITHOUT A HORSE

THE storm raged throughout the night and most of the following day, the snow heaping, in the wind, about the front and one side of the house to such a depth that next morning it was necessary to dig through a drift that reached to the eaves to get to the horses. On the south and part of the east sides of the house the grass was almost bare for a distance of three feet, but beyond that the snow piled steeply as high as the house.

All through the night the sheepman fretted about his sheep, though his talk was an effort to reason himself out of his fears.

"They're always looking for the storm," he said. "At this time of the year they feed where they can reach shelter in time. A sheep-herder becomes the best weather prophet in the world. He has to be or lose his sheep. South of here the country is more broken, though the foraging is good enough. That's where the herds are now. There's always a bank near at hand where they can crowd in out of the wind, and let the snow drift beyond them."

Some time during the morning hours he thought of another reason for reassurance. "The Mounties know where the herds

are they'll be out there through the storm searching for my men. True bunch of Indians about Red Deer. One or another always seen picking around every two or three months to see how I'm getting along, or if I'm running a outfit or something. Now you might say, but Fred isn't I glad to see them. They're sure to come looking for me after this storm. Know much about their whereabouts from.

Pete admitted in his reply a plain Indian account gave that he knew of them but he still gave no hint where he saw them. But the final fact was a threat of a trial from a Mounted Policeman scared him. If he had been there and captured might spoil everything. The Mounted Police would know of the bank robbery; they would be looking for the two who escaped. He was convinced out of them it made him eager to get away.

Now I starting to travel east the sun came out and a bright day though the blizzard so far north was not so vanishing as at Fort Macleod. Had where thirty below zero at midnight night to fifty above before daylight that the wind was surprised a storm and the snow rapidly disappeared before it. So that by morning great patches of bare glass were visible and even the drift in the houses had sunk to a height than is more than a foot deep.

It was soon however before he could get in trying himself from the driving of the successive sheepman and at that he was informed with a feeling that his burns had caused some suspense in the mind of his host. That disturbed him little. There he was again he was willing to take his chances. It was certain that within a couple of days at the most a Mounted Policeman would visit the hut and with the news that two Indians had passed that way so soon after the bank robbery there would be further investigation.

The horse would probably be on and now with some sort of direction. It would carry to the Indian encampments, and make his task more difficult. He almost regretted having found shelter from the storm since the description the officer would be given would surely include his cracked ribs. These he could never hope to hide.

He was much nearer to meeting the Mounted Police than he thought. Only the instant that warned him of approaching danger saved him.

Without conscious planning, he had kept as much as

possible to the lower levels were sticking out from the road near Red Deer. Long after all risk of immediate pursuit had passed he avoided heights. Now with one of the robbers ahead of him he was more scared than ever.

About four in the afternoon however after a half hour's rest for horse & rider and his horse he climbed a slope searching for a depression that would lead more directly toward the mountains. His head had never been so far about the upper level when far to the south and slightly westward he saw a rider approaching at a fast lope. A glance was enough the be on working time of the Mounted Police was evident.

He dashed but not before he had been seen. In some excitement he galloped back and his rider even darted about in search of some place of concealment. There were no trees but a lower treed slope to the west where he had seen the other and he raced up it until he feared that the pounding of his horse's hoofs might be heard.

The policeman he knew would search for him but he would not expect that anyone wishing to avoid him would ride toward him.

To his consternation the police suddenly turned directly across the route the policeman would have to follow. At first it looked like a fatal danger then he saw his chance. At some distant time the water that had flowed through the depression had gouged a shelf like bank in the bank. Into this he rode and disappeared. Whoppers would have lain down at a word but the strange branch had to be thrown and held down.

In a very few minutes the oncoming police horse could be heard galloping nearer. It reached the corner where the half breed expected it would turn down the slope and up the other side. In full view of the half breed it appeared on the height above and halted it for a time. Had the policeman turned his head he could not have raised horse and rider in the hollow below but he was intent on the country before him where Millie Pete had last been seen.

The policeman disappeared. With a sigh of relief the half breed rose and let his mount lopet to his feet. And then the creature neighed.

It was a subdued sound for the half breed leaped to the open mouth and lopped the jaws together with his powerful hands, but to him it sounded like a battery of guns, and he stood holding his breath.

One minute he grated, "With others, anyone who has got the smell of a gun like Whistler I get which I see I gotta learn with a lot things 'till I git a horse," "An' you ain't no bad anyways. But it's such 't' that ag on I'll plug you down upon where you'd death 'cos all them's to walk the road 't' the way an carry the saddle I bin help myself from a horse carry though it wouldn't help me none but now I gotta do 't' behave yourself."

The voice from the upper level warned him that the policeman had heard him and had pulled up to locate the sound. Blue Peter considered what was best to do. The turn in the trail sheltered the horse he needed and he leaped into the saddle and hurried around the bend. He could not be seen unless the policeman returned all the way.

If he were discovered he would have to ride for it. Thinking his chances over he was little alarmed. The police horse had certainly travelled far that day and the snowy days before and would not be fresh whereas his own had had a rest. His horse too was tough and the policeman's horse was not a broncho.

Around the bend he waited for further developments. He did not wish to risk the tramp of his horse being heard. Then from a long train some distance down where he thought the other would be closer a faint Hell-ho.

He did not answer but urged his mount slowly along and when sufficient distance intervened he broke it into a lope.

He was safe now but his evident sense to evade the other would be certain to arouse the latter's suspicion, and he must still avoid being seen. Fortunately the country was rapidly becoming more broken and there was no difficulty in keeping out of sight.

As he rode his spur to roar. The very thought that a new danger was added to his task increased its attractiveness. That was characteristic. In the original form it had offered some danger but the intrusion of the bank robbers with the consequent shooting and now the Mounted Police having a cue for claiming the chase induced more excitement ahead. It made the mountains less depressing.

He needed something like that now for the snowy heights were in such plain view that he felt that in another hour or two he would be within their shadow.

Shortly before nightfall the country became more broken, with patches of trees, and here and there a stream that had

to be forded. He had seen no sign of a trail since leaving the Red Deer road and as yet only the sheepman's hut after the first forenoon. The snow-clad peaks rose bleakly in the clear air, the white of their precipitous sides extending into the tree line to show that the storm had raged there. A new darkness filled the air and as evening advanced it increased to a perceptible sharpness that made him search for shelter as soon as possible the night.

It made him think of the approaching winter and he wondered if his walk would be so bad that his task would keep him there all the cold season. He began to question the prudence he had made for such a season; the trustworthiness and endurance of his teamster, and what use it would be in the snow. However back in his mind too was the certainty that some day he would have to face an investigation of the bank robbery. It would make his position uncomfortable. With the storm's approach on him by Inspector Parker he was not free to reveal himself should the local detachment lay hands on him.

The forest growth thinned but he advanced as far as he could in the failing light and at last dismounted in a thick wood beside a meadow. Hobbiling his horse he turned it loose to feed and lay down in the solitary blanket he carried.

Contrary to his usual custom, he did not fall asleep immediately. A strange uneasiness kept intruding into his weariness. He decided it was the nearness of the mountains, and at last dropped into unconsciousness.

It was an uneasy sleep and he awoke early. He did not set about the day's duties immediately, but lay wondering why he should feel such an urge for it. The blanket kept out much of the light of the rising sun and he clutched himself for an unreasoning nervousness. After a time, however, he could bear it no longer and he rose and pushed through to the meadow where he had left the brooch.

It was nowhere in sight.

The shock of the discovery, for he knew the animal would not wander from such a well-watered feeding-ground, sent him wading back to the thicket to think things over. He knew the hobbles would prevent it wandering far even if it tried to and the sun was as yet not hot enough to drive it to the shadows.

Working his way through the trees parallel with the edge

of the meadow he arrived at last at the other side. As he went along he examined the ground. Just beyond where the little stream that cut through the meadow was nearest the forest he found what he sought—fresh hoof marks. Among them he quickly traced those of his own broncho, as well as proved that it had left with the others, since here and there its marks were covered. All this had called for nothing but the ordinary powers of observation of one who carried his life in his hands. Besides, the broncho was an unusually large one which accounted for its value to the liveryman.

Plainly too his hobbies had been removed.

That was all he needed; the Indians had come on the broncho as I had carried it off. They had figured that without a horse its owner would be unable to overtake them, would scarcely dare to follow.

In that they made a mistake.

Blue Pete turned back to the spot where he had spent the night, threw his pack sack over his shoulders, and set out along the trail.

That it would not be a short trail he knew. The Indians, in spite of the feeling of security they must have would not daily but after a day or so they would feel safer to linger. Mounted they would not expect a man on foot to give them trouble.

But to Blue Pete no trail was too long. Tireless on foot and swift unlike the ordinary cowboy who mounts a horse to cross the street a habit almost necessary because of his high-heeled boots worn to prevent the feet slipping through the stirrups, as he should be thrown he set out.

At first the trail was easy to follow for the ground was soft and the Indians had felt so secure that they had not thought it necessary to cover their route. The one thing that troubled the half breed was that it seemed to show that the group was going a long distance, and hoped by that to be safe from an indignant owner.

All through the morning he kept on the trail, for the most part at a leisurely trot but it carried him over the ground with amazing speed. By the hoof marks he could read fairly accurately the speed with which the Indians had gone, and he knew that though they had several hours start he was more than holding his own. It was these pauses for rest and refreshment that enabled him to overtake them. In addition, they were unlikely to travel by night.

He figured that he would come up with them the next day, since he too must have some rest and he could not be certain of the trail in the dark. Patches of hard ground too kept appearing later in the day, and in some of them the Indians had altered their course enough to belie him. Once indeed they had turned directly toward the mountains before leaving a large area of shale that had been torn by the frost or some upheaval from a cliff and the delay in picking up the trail again made him more cautious.

That night he lay down where the morning sun would waken him early. The Indians, he knew, would start early, resting in the heat of the day and travelling in the cool of morning and evening.

One thing that encouraged him was the fact that the country was growing much rougher, and the progress of their ponies was slower.

With the first glint of the sun he was off. The way was more difficult but worse for horses than for men and by mid forenoon he saw evidence that they were not far ahead.

His plan was to come on them while they were resting for the middle meal, and he slackened his pace a little. A rifle shot not far before him proved that his estimate of their position was correct. One of them was probably bringing in game for the noon meal and he crept forward more cautiously. He wished to make his appearance while they were unmounted and grouped together. It would place them more at his mercy should they prove hostile. He had no idea what his reception would be but whatever it was, they had his broncho and he must retrieve it.

He could hear them now and he kept just far enough behind to run no risk of being seen, trusting to his ears to maintain a safe distance. His ears told him when they stopped to build a fire and when the ponies had been curried loose to feed.

Crawling cautiously nearer them he saw that the fire was built beside a stream. The Indians except for one tending the fire were squatting on the ground about it while their mounts grazed on a plot of grass on the other side of the stream. A glance told him that his own broncho was among them.

CHAPTER XIII

A BROTHER INDIAN

He had had lots of time to conjecture his plan. Much depended on the date on which the Indians returned since some were to be left out and fewer than others. Several points deserved thought over of which he might be able to take advantage. Should the Indians appear later, he could jump the horses so they might wait until dark and steal it back from them. If he might suddenly walk in on them gun drawn and kill Turner?

Such plans he made in his mind one that offered a good chance of the Indian's capture. It appealed to him more strongly because he must look ahead. Should he start off by reaching the Indians his enemies or would their's interfere with the job before him?

Accomplish he waited until the moon was under way from a low, greater height than that and were hidden over the hill and where the Indians ate a dinner Mac Phee suddenly appeared in the open red earth camp ground and started down it and rather haltingly began to run on them.

He had taken the opportunity to kill his rifle and all the arms of his men his right hand grasping the stock. In the front of his face his eye was aggressively bright. Plainly he was prepared for another round of the traps laid for him.

He had a gait like nothing thirty miles the right sound of his riding horse muted—the rapidity of the charge before he was discovered. And the Indians on the other side of the hill happened to see him leave the house he grasped his sword, sprang the horse it leaped to the ground and a grand Indian who had not yet come up brought out the about to fix on him enquiringly.

They were no more surprised than he was when he realized that the man whom he had had forced to run was Joe Blue Eyes the Kiowa he had attacked and tied up in the cutbank near the Kiowa. An attempt at Medicine Hat.

A ripple of execration followed the high his leap but he gave no sign of it. Steadily he advanced.

The Indian who had seen him first跑 had recovered from his surprise and his

own wife and formal understandings. The Indian held his hand.

It was then Blue Pete saw that he need not have been concerned about his reception. The Indians were Wood Creek, a peaceful tribe, and more considerate than their brothers to the rule of the white man. The Plainsmen were always stern and often gruff. A single laugh his master hunged a little; he even permitted a slight smile to appear on his face. It was not answered.

A dozen paces away the half-breed stopped and addressed him in the same language to one of the Indians who had turned to wait him at the chief.

I see my friend has returned home. He has a habit of wandering. I am glad to see he has not been a murderer and I thank you all the same for him.

The half-breed, accepting the friendly approach though a momentary glow revealed his disappointment. He found no joy in the forest. He was lost. I hope my friend does not think me a dead heart.

Blue Pete raised a commanding hand. I should have believed him never unkind. But even then he watched. I might not have known him. I was afraid. I was very tired.

He waited. He must be invited to join the group or it meant that they up the right the wherries and a full account of later made of his activities to them. As far as they would be interested, they waited for the invitation he needed to visit the camp, amidst the sigh the leather.

He was silent too about Joe Blue Custer. He had never seen the Indian before that evening when he had stepped up him and beat him and the legend that Joe had not seen him. But what was the Indian doing away here so far from home? Could his parents have some connection with the whereabouts of North Wind? It did not disquiet him in his imagination to decide that it did.

Could it be that Little Blue had after all told her story revealing to her people that she had betrayed them and had told where North Wind had gone and he, Joe Blue Custer, came to warn him. Whatever the answer it appeared the height of wisdom to keep in touch with the Indian. Another reason for wishing to make the tribe his friends.

For several moments nobody spoke. The chief hesitated. The instant the contact of his hand, and a guilty consciousness made him nervous. But at last, with a

wave of his hand he invited the new-comer to join the group. It meant that at least they had not won through his disregard, but had accepted him as an Indian like themselves. It was reassuring.

The half-breed bent his head in token of thanks and stepped forward squatting before the fire among them. He managed however to so place himself that none were behind him.

"Mountain Stream says welcome" murmured the chief.
"My friend comes from where?"

"From far to the south" replied Blue Pete "where the prairie meets the mountains. I come alone travelling far."

"My friend goes where?"

The half-breed shrugged his broad shoulders. "Where game is good and far plentiful. Where I come from the seasons promises to be bad. But I would not cross another's trap-line."

"Good" Mountain Stream grunted his approval of the sentiment and waved an arm about. "There is room for all."

We went farther north near where a railway runs. It brightens the game a little but it is still plentiful. He looked the stranger over speculatively. "My friend is a good hunter."

Blue Pete smiled modestly. "If a straight eye and a quick hand mean a hunter I can do my share. Light in dark shoots once, no more."

It would have sounded boastful had it not been for the speaker's modestly disguised eyes. It was merely a statement of fact answer to a plain question.

The chief threw his arm out with a graceful movement, the hand long, and in its belt to draw a revolver.

Mountain Stream took slowly out, once.

An incursive bird that had eyed the group speculatively for some time flew to a nearby tree with many weak protesting squeaks fluttered nervous, to the ground and hopped about. With a seemingly careless movement the chief aimed and fired and the bird sprang into the air and dropped back dead.

Blue Pete's expression of admiration was well done. He knew what was expected of him and he looked for some target that would prove him no braggart. The unexpected challenger placed him in a predicament. It was not that he doubted his ability to back his words with deeds, but that if he made too surprising a demonstration of skill they might

be dangerously curious. With his reputation as a marksman about Medicine Hat it might arouse some suspicion in the mind of Joe Blue Goose. He must shoot well, but not too well.

He drew his gun and looked about. No birds were in sight, but there were a thousand targets on which to show his marksmanship. As he hesitated Mountain Stream pointed to the tree from which the bird had flown.

"Up there" he said "is a broken twig. It hangs by the bark. If you do not cut the bark, I will."

Blue Pete took careful aim, though in his best shooting he never appeared to trouble about that, and the shot rang out. The twig jerked and the edge of the bark set open, but the twig held fast. It was a good shot, but it had not severed the bark.

Mountain Stream smiled confidently and fired, and an ejaculation of chagrin broke from him as the twig still hung.

To cover his discomfiture he grunted "It is well. Light-in-Dark does not talk with big words. He is a brother." He extended his hand in the fashion of the whites. "He will come with us and camp with us?" But when the grizzly or the mountain devil are near every bullet must be exactly on the mark. Mine was close," he added defensively, frowning about on his followers for any evidence of dissent. "Light-in-Dark's pony is there for him and his saddle I have with mine. We will start."

CHAPTER XIV

A GOOD SHOT

ELATED with the turn of events, but careful not to show it, Blue Pete saw that, for the moment, he had attained his object. Accepted as a friend, only some heedless act of his own would turn them against him. With the first thrill over however he was less easy about things. He was certain that Joe Blue Goose had no suspicion of his identity though it was difficult to believe that anyone in the Medicine Hat district did not know him. He had never seen the Indian before the attack he made on him in the cutbank probably due to the fact that Joe had spent most of his time elsewhere

saw the half breed's arrival in Canada from Montana two years before. But he realized his own inclination toward carelessness even recklessness and confidence in himself waned.

There were so many things that might in a thoughtless moment expose the part he played. His hatred of the Indians was the first and greatest danger a feeling he had never tried to conceal. The second he had immediately overcome in the contest of marksmanship with Mountain Stream should he shoot it well as well as he was capable of these moments would be strained. The third danger was a trial by the Mounted Police. Any officer of the law would be curious about the stranger and he could but hope to deceive him for long.

To run the risk of a full blooded Indian presented little difficulty. He may had he considered it that several times before but his Indian mother had left him all the outward marks of the race and with his hair unshaved long the effort was as untried. The Indian manner and gait were easy to assume and he spoke several of their languages.

Though confident that his new friends accepted him for several days he took no chances. While riding he always kept well to the rear and during the rest periods he sat with his back against a tree large enough to prevent him from behind and the members of the group he tried to keep before him where he could keep an eye on them. There was nothing unusual in his desire to retire from the group to sleep, and to make more secure the isolated spot he chose he took pains to scatter about at dry twigs that would warn him of the approach of anyone.

So careful was he that he began to fear that the very persistence of such precautions might arouse their suspicions.

On the third day an incident occurred that ingratiated him further in their good graces.

They had run short of meat and three of the group had broken away to search for game with instructions to meet at twilight at a selected spot where they would make camp for the night. Joe Blue Lizard was one of the hunters.

During his absence Blue Lizard fell over an arm. It loosened his shoulder a fact of which Mountain Stream availed himself. The danger he ran in talking so much was by eight degree only when he happened to mention an incident that had occurred in Medicine Hat. To cover his confusion he changed the subject.

ton abruptly and a slight frown showed for a moment on the chief's face.

With the thought of wiping the incident from Mountain Stream's mind he suggested that he try his own hand at hunting. He did not know the location of the place where they planned to meet but he would have no trouble in picking up their trail. Mountain Stream hesitated to accept the offer but finally gave his consent. That something was in the bear's mind Blue Pete saw but he broke away from the group and started westward in a deep left in the hills.

He had advanced only half a mile when leaving his mount into a thicket he dismounted and ran back through the trees to a point where he could watch the route the Indians were taking.

He was not surprised a few minutes later when Mountain Stream came riding along the route he knew had followed and the chief's keen Indian eyes were bent on the ground. Now and then he glanced from side to side. He was searching for something or someone and it was not hard to guess who the someone was. There behind the chief came Joe Blue Gown. Father the Mountain had returned after only a short hunt or he had never been far away.

The sight of the two Indians was a shock to the half-blinded Lawrence. It meant that the Indians had not accepted him as unerringly as he had thought. Could it be that Joe Blue Gown had all the time known who he was?

If that were so the one safe course was to escape while he had the chance for the Indians would never forgive him, a hard lesson for a young boy out of sight of their own kind. With that in mind he rose from the hiding place where he lay intending to return to his horse and flee.

At that moment the bushes immediately above the two Indians set on the raw he parted your breath, and the head of a huge grizzly came into view. Neither Mountain Stream nor Joe Blue Gown had a suspicion of the danger so close to them and before Blue Pete could shout a warning the bear pounced down the slope and leaped straight at them.

In his descent one huge paw sent Joe Blue Gown tumbling from the saddle as if he had been shot. The leap ended squarely on Mountain Stream who had had no time to shout. Bear and man crashed to the ground.

Mountain Stream's hand flew to his knife but the bear's

jaws hovered over his face and a paw swept against the arm that held the knife and panned it to the ground.

Blue Pete acted quickly. Even as the bear leaped his rifle lifted. Mountain Stream sat bunting helplessly, struggling to protect his face. The half breed pulled the trigger almost before he had time to get his eye along the sights.

With a roar of pain the bear sprang upright, pawing at the air. And before it could drag back on the chord a second bullet went through its brain and it rolled limply away.

Mountain Stream sat up staring vacantly about. The sudden attack and the fall had stunned him a little but perhaps had made him fight for his life. Joe Blue Goose too, was coming to his senses and looking about for his rifle.

Blue Pete sat crouched down the slope his eye still on the bear, and his rifle ready. For even two bullets in one bound to be fatal, will seldom stop a grizzly in its tracks. He made for the huge brute and sent a bullet from his .45 into its brain. Still paying no attention to the two staring Indians he rolled the bear over to examine the two bullet holes made by his rifle.

"Huh!" It was a grunt of disgust. "Jesus and I thought I had to hit the second one for sure. Wasn't no vital spot to reach for the first one the way the bear was. Had to make him get up so I could reach his heart. Cripes! th a soft nose neither else to kill 'em."

He looked about. Joe Blue Goose sat staring at him with wide startled eyes. A flutter of foreboding followed by a wave of disgust at his own carelessness made the half breed return the stare with a foolish grin.

"Reckon you ain't fooled no longer Joe," he said still in English.

The Indian's lips parted. "Blue Pete!" he gasped.

Mountain Stream had risen to his feet. He understood no English and appeared to be interested only in the bear.

"What you gonna do bout it?" Blue Pete enquired of the Blackfoot.

Joe Blue Goose spread his hands. "No business of mine, Blue Pete saved my life. That's all that matters. Joe Blue Goose's lips are sealed."

At least he did not connect Blue Pete with the attack that day in the cutbank and apart from the difference in their origins the Blackfoot could have no cause for unfriendliness. Whether the fact that Blue Pete came from Medicine Hat

would arouse some suspicion of the reason for his presence in the foothills depended on his connection with North Wind.

The half breed nodded his thanks, and perked his head toward Mountain Stream. "Pes stop talkin' English, he'll wonder. Tell him it's all right wot we're talkin'."

He did not wait for the explanation, but himself addressed the chief in his own language. "Rather spoiled the skin, Mountain Stream but I had to hit heavy where I could. I know these grizzlies. I was once guide to a party of Englishmen in the foothills. We ran into two grizzlies. One of them four of us shot together shot at I mean. One bullet got it right in the heart, but it kept on coming. I had to knock it out with a bullet in the head, and get in two more shots before it fell. The Englishmen had a lot to say. I said some of it just now to Joe Blue Goose."

The chief grunted; he suspected nothing. Light-in-Dark saved two lives. Now Light-in-Dark is a full brother." He placed both hands on Blue Pete's shoulders and grunted twice murmuring a few unintelligible words. He turned to the bear. "Meat enough for a week now. Light-in-Dark is a great hunter. The skin is his. It will keep him warm when winter comes."

The bronchos of the two Indians had raced madly away up the ravine, for nothing so terrifies them as a bear. Blue Pete ran to his own broncho, and quickly had them rounded up and back to their owners.

By the time he returned the bear was skinned and the choicest cuts were removed from the carcass.

That night, for the first time, a pipe was passed from hand to hand, Blue Pete taking the first puff after Mountain Stream. For the time being he was safe.

CHAPTER XV

AMBUSHED

BLUE PETE had been careful to make no direct enquiries as to where they were going, but since cold weather was approaching he felt certain their destination was the horse camp. They had probably been south visiting other camps, or investigating other hunting grounds. They

carried some for hot there was too little of it and the summer skins were lightly tanned. It meant that they had not been spending their time hunting.

As an adopted member of the tribe he would be expected to hunt with them and share their life. While their home camp was a short distance away he yet saw he had no idea where he could go where his hunt for North Wind. The main reason being that was the presence of Joe Blue Petie who the Blue Pete could not get himself out of the thought and the hope that the Blackfoot was on his way either to help or to warn the man he was after.

It pleased him to see that even as stated by Mountain Stream he might never mind the eight the various Indian encampments with all caution. He knew that his presence with the tribe was far at least as it had saved the chief's life would spread quickly through the districts.

What he or Joe Blue Petie however did say the day that followed he was less confident of the Blackfoot's purpose for went around about nothing but was intent to get along and live as a member of Mountain Stream's tribe. Where or how he had joined the tribe Blue Petie never knew but there was no question of his standing with Mountain Stream and his followers.

During the succeeding days they passed three Indian encampments and stopped at each for a short time sleeping at one of them. It enabled the half breed to satisfy himself that North Wind was not there. At the same time it familiarized him with the habits and membership of the camp and introduced him as a friend.

They reached the fourth campment. They had come north so far that he knew they could not be far from the trailway that cut through the mountains from Fort Benton. The camp too as they moved nearer the railway showed the effects of a lower association with civilization. More numbers were apparent and a more sophisticated manner and method of living.

The fourth camp was best of all. It had been built with an eye to comfort in the cold winters of the northern foothills. The houses were well built and carefully sited between the logs. It was an Indian life Blue Petie had never experienced before and it interested him. The chief's cabin stood apart in the centre of the circle of huts the finest and largest of all. The chief himself a fine figure of a man bore himself

with a dignity befitting his rank. In his welcome to the visitors he showed to best effect and Blue Pete's frank admiration of everything he saw plainly pleased him.

The half breed wandered aimlessly about the circle of cabins forgetting his purpose. He longed to see inside but, except the fleeting glances that was denied him. The Indians, too were a fine lot a surprising however since it was usual for them to be soft and lazy in direct proportion to their proximity to the white man's comforts and manner of living.

During his stroll almost at the last cabin he was brought swiftly back to his duty by the narrow opening of a door that closed more swiftly than it opened. Always sensitive to movements like that he restrained his curiosity and continued his walk. As he passed the other side of the circle where he could look without arousing suspicion, he was in time to see an Indian disappear around the cabin and dash out of sight into the woods beyond.

A tingle of excitement raced through him and he concentrated on the glimpse he had caught. There was something familiar about the fellow but for a time he could not imagine who it was.

It came to him suddenly so suddenly that he halted and faced squarely toward the spot where the Indian had disappeared. It was the bark robber who had shot at him in Red Deer!

For a moment his inclination was to race after him. But he managed to restrain himself. After all the fellow was no concern of his. In short, the other three he himself had done more than could be expected of him and now he had another job of greater importance to him to do there in the foothills. It was only the alert that he had become involved in the Red Deer affair an alert that had left no comfortable memories and might prove dangerous for him in the end and he wanted to forget it. He had no special feeling against the dead Indians though he felt no friendliness toward the one who had escaped for he had fired a shot that might have spoiled everything.

Better forget it especially as he himself was probably sought now by the Mounted Police as one of the robbers.

The instant however hung in him as he moved about. The hasty way the Indian had acted was threatening. Something about it seemed to imply an enemy and an enemy

loose in the foothills might make trouble for him—no, rather for the job he was trying to do.

There was, however, nothing to be done about it and he rejoined his companions, and rode out of the camp in the early afternoon. A single common-sense precaution he took, more by instinct than by plan. He was careful to ride in the heart of the group.

Every precaution, however, came near to failing him. They had ridden only a few minutes when, from a thicket of trees on a hill-top, a rifle-shot rang out and a bullet whistled close to his head, cutting through the sleeve of the Indian beyond him.

In five seconds the group had scattered without a word, dashing into the trees and seeking cover. Blue Pete clung to Mountain Stream. It was not that he felt safer there, but he wished to make sure that the chief was in no way concerned in the ambush. They regarded each other with startled eyes.

"What does it mean?" Mountain Stream was plainly even more surprised and upset than was the half-breed.

Blue Pete would have preferred to pass the incident off as some sort of accident since he wanted no part of the Red Deer story to be known, so far as it concerned him, but that was impossible.

"Was he shooting at you?" he asked.

Mountain Stream peered from the thicket in which they had taken shelter. "It was a bad shot if it was at me." He pointed. "It came from up there. Come with me, we will find out."

For a couple of hundred yards Mountain Stream spurred his mount to the north, then cut back up the slope keeping well within the trees. For a time Blue Pete followed. He was undecided how to act. He knew, only too well, who had fired the shot and at whom it was aimed but it might defeat his whole purpose for the bank-robbert to be captured and forced to tell the story.

Accordingly, at the first opportunity he lingered behind. He could hear Mountain Stream still pushing up the slope at top speed, his idea evidently being to cut in behind the thicket from which the shot had come.

Blue Pete turned and, keeping close to the foot of the slope where its curving rise protected him, he rode southward. He was curious, he wished to be sure. And he was

getting more and more angry. He saw that though the time the attempt on his life had failed there was something drastic was done about it the attempt would be repeated until it succeeded. Whatever was true however must be certain between himself and the would be assassin.

He figured that the Indian would walk somewhat more deeply into the bushes if the forest path a way was imagined but there was the possibility that he might cut back to the south and re-enter the open trail which he had fled.

With that in mind he walked fast as he could and after a few minutes shifted his direction to the west. All the time he listened but only hearing usual.

He never heard then that the hairy older had left without a sound so that he could not go far. It did give him the advantage however of being able to move about without making a sound outside his quarters might be located by the tramp of their human boots.

Shortly after hearing nothing the half breed slowed down. He wanted to return to avoid another ambush. The crackle of a twig not far away warned him that someone was near at the three hundred from the bushes and advanced on him. Swiftly but noiselessly he moved skipping every few yards to listen.

Time and again he heard someone moving through the trees before him and he kept on. Presently the Indian had come to the conclusion that he was well away from himself but he seemed to be making his way directly up to the engagement and was oblivious of the noise he made.

Without a wave of anger and hatred swept over the half breed. This was the man who had shot at him in Red River the man who had taken a gun and shot at him in an ambush while he was so surprised his traps. A dangerous man who must be settled with and without delay. Some little they would have to come face to face and fight it out. Better to have it over now and save himself trouble in the task he had to carry through. Even the memory of the three Indians he had been forced to shoot he held against the man some where ahead of him.

In his anger he grew careless. Suddenly he realized that for several minutes he had heard nothing. Had the Indian stopped or had he become aware that he was followed and was starting to shadow his progress?

Fearing the latter the half breed turned to the east and

when he fancied himself safe started to run. He planned to cut off the Indian's retreat to the camp, should he attempt it, and if an ambush was in mind he could turn back and surprise him.

It took only a few minutes to convince himself that the fellow had not made for the camp, and he started back, moving with caution, and listening for any revealing sound. He heard nothing. It worried him and he became impatient. It seemed to him that the only way he might find the Indian was to expose himself. It was dangerous, but necessary.

Deliberately he stepped on a twig, and the crackle rang through the trees. Nothing else happened. He advanced a few more steps, and again snapped a twig.

He had almost come to the conclusion that during his race toward the camp the Indian had fled when something happened. The warning sense that had served him so often came suddenly to life with the double warning that it had been ringing for attention for some time. Now it was too late.

He flattened against a tree and turned his eyes to the point from which the warning had come. Not a dozen paces away the Indian stood glowering at him, rifle pointing straight at his breast!

CHAPTER XVI

CAPTURED

A SHEEPISH grin spread over Blue Pete's face. Uppermost in his mind was not fear but chagrin and shame. He had made another mistake, had let his impatience crowd out ordinary caution. And he had not credited the Indian with the cunning of his race. He had stalked him as he would a white man, who trusted to intelligence rather than to instinct. Perhaps he had been made more careless by the fact that the bullet fired at him from such a close range had missed its mark. Such a miss aroused only contempt.

Now, staring into the little round hole of a steady held rifle, he realized how thoughtless he had been—what a fix he had got himself into.

He was conscious of no fear, no real sense of helplessness, but, now, whatever he did was almost certain to expose their relationship to Mountain Stream and his men.

The Indian sneered. "You walked into it," he said in Cree. "You must be inexperienced."

Blue Pete grunted. He saw that his disguise had not been penetrated. "You shot at my chief," he growled. "You are not a Wood Cree."

The other laughed nastily and spat. "Neither are you. I asked about you. I am not a Wood Cree. I hate them, I spit at them." He spat again. "I can say it now, because you won't be alive to tell them."

It struck into the half breed something of the seriousness of the situation the Indian would have no compunctions about shooting him in cold blood and there were many adequate explanations to make should it be discovered.

"Whatever you do to me" he said "my friends will find you and kill you. The camp you were in will learn of it and help. Every Cree in the foothills will search for you."

The threat had no effect. "Many are looking for me now—more dangerous than Indians. You must know that. You shot at me in Red Deer. I missed you that time. I will not miss this time."

"You've missed me twice already," peered Blue Pete, now blinding angry. "An Indian who can shoot no better should wear a squaw's dress."

The Indian scowled. "Your broncho reared just as I fired. He advanced a couple of steps, his face contorted with anger. "What happened to my friends in Red Deer?"

Blue Pete shrugged. "You did not see? You have not heard?"

"I have heard they were shot. Who did it?"

"You should have waited, and not run, like the coward you are. There was much shooting." The half breed hesitated whether to tell of their fate.

"They had the money. You rode between them and me."

"Yes" said Blue Pete. "And I shot them—one—two—three. Just like that. It was good practice."

The Indian's teeth bared. "I thought it might be you. I'm glad, now, that I missed you. There are other ways for you to die, ways that will pay for what you have done. I know several ways that will avenge them and satisfy me."

The half breed felt better. He saw that the Indian was so angry that his hands shook. "You daren't shoot me here," he peered. "A shot would bring the whole tribe about us."

My chief is back there now to cut you off from the mountains. The tribe is scattered, looking for you."

He had been standing with raised hands. Now he commenced to lower them.

The Indian saw it and started. Keep them up. I take no prisoners. It's so much the easier to shoot you here I can get away. But the threat had frightened him. Turn and walk that way.

Now Pete turned. With his back to the Indian, he was given helpless time to give him time to plan and left him some control of the situation they took the horse with a fair amount of information where the chief would be and almost unoppositably he edged in that direction.

He thought that he might make sufficient noise as they went to warn any of the other Indians within hearing. There were dead twigs and leaves everywhere and he went out of his way to push them. He even succeeded in dislodging a stick or a sprig and the rattle of it carried through the forest. That the Indian at his back was too intent on his capture to notice pronounced well. With no surroundings he nearly would find some means of drawing later even if no one intervened.

When they find me, he said over his shoulder, they'll know who shot me. I've told them about you. It will be easier for you if they think it was the bear who shot at. It will fit the right event, am I not? It will be without trouble.

They suddenly snapped the Indian and never more quickly. I know how to get about with less noise. I'll make certain they never find us. I'll leave you where the grizzly and the mountain devils will finish you.

He saw his plan failing and then Pete tried another he appealed to give up hope. His shoulders drooped his head hung his feet dragged.

They reached an open space. Before them rose a steep hill, with only scattered trees over it. Then Pete raised his eyes. On the open height over their heads stood Mountain Stream, staring down on them.

The half breed pointed. Look.

His captive turned startled eyes upward. On the instant Pete leaped behind a tree at the same time reaching for his gun. The Indian almost as readily ducked to cover and ran zigzagging from tree to tree.

He made a noise too dull with targets but the half breed did not shout. "Something too soft for requesting held his hand.

There would be no satisfaction in bringing down such an enemy from behind their enemy was much too better now to be settled so simply.

Mountain Stream shouted, and started down the hill. Blue Pete stepped into the open, grinning. The chief stopped before him, running a scowling eye over him.

"Light in Dark was careless," he growled scornfully. "There is more to being a good hunter than a good aim."

Blue Pete nodded. "Yes there is cunning as well."

"Light in Dark knows the words. Does he know their meaning?"

"A wide meaning, indeed," returned the half-breed. "I was cunning. I led his enemy to Mountain Stream. It was not my place to shoot one who had shot at the chief, that was for Mountain Stream himself."

The implied rebuke had its effect. The chief nodded. "I did not understand. I saw two coming from the trees. When I recognized you it was too late. I am sorry."

Blue Pete pursed his lips indifferently. "It means nothing to me."

Later he was to discover how thoughtlessly he spoke.

Mountain Stream's eyes flashed. "We will follow him. He will be found in some encampment. Would you know him again?"

The half-breed's head shook. "He was in the shadow back there when he made me turn, and I led him to you. He will not be found now. He is not a Wood Cree. He must have been following you."

They made their way to the encampment they had left a few hours before and Mountain Stream spoke of the ambush. There was no reason to suspect the guest who had done it.

On their way back to join the rest of the tribe Mountain Stream asked,

How was it that he captured you, Light in-Dark?"

Blue Pete was prepared. He smiled easily. "When the coyote captures the wolf it is because the wolf has planned it. It is a plan that bodes ill for the coyote. But the coyote is too puffed with pride to foresee the danger."

It was a language Mountain Stream understood. "We will find him some time together," he said.

Blue Pete was not interested. When the Indian was found he wanted to be alone with him.

CHAPTER XVII

ATTEMPTED MURDER

THE HLT had been two weeks of fine weather. That was to be expected after the first snowfall. The Pete had waited in a month for word information on the West and it seemed to offer sufficient time for what he had to do. He was interested therefore when the nights suddenly became much colder and a long train of the air that warned of snow.

It struck him then that he knew little of the weather conditions so far north and so near the mountains. Not a time he had it in his mind that the cold in the air was so strong but the influence of the glacier that seemed to cover most of northern Asia had not yet passed, and increased the number of the days spent with Mountain streams and his team was not useless extended. As one he could have crossed those great wastes now always spread his team over more benefits. The snow though were going against him with them and with their burden. However the night was over.

These thoughts he tried to satisfy in the fact of the Blue Oxen's position. The Black ox had left his side for fitting Blue Pete's sleds and he was unquestionably a friend. As yet. At the same time the last herd often heard from over land or in villages had not been red quite satisfied.

So a flight at the Blue Oxen's command to the roads through the mountains of avoiding the Mountain River and his purposes were asked about. In fact Blue would use the Alpine crossing even as far as possible a month to the hunting grounds but on the Mountain's side of had been friends enough in Mountain Stream. At the same time the Blue Oxen must have remembered that he had however gone to the last herd before where he was at home the Alpine River and the Mountain Highlands. And both of those ways more or less than where he was now.

Thus the day Blue Oxen imagined that he could before long get away to the last herd a road still without return to the home to have connection with Mountain Stream. Nothing definite however occurred to relations such a doubtful of its existence and still it seemed true that a way be found to dispel it. He managed to get far apart.

"Joe Blue Goose has been a good friend" he said in the Blackfoot language.

The Indian grunted. It meant nothing in particular.

"I will go," Blue Pete offered, "if I am not wanted. I do not wish to make my friend uncomfortable."

"Why should I be uncomfortable?" asked the Indian.

"I do not wish to bring my friends under the suspicion of the Mounted Police."

It was enough. Joe Blue Goose's brows raised. "They are after you again? You ran away?"

Blue Pete appeared to hesitate. My friend does not wish me to tell him too much; it might not be safe if the Mounted Police came. Life was dull about Medicine Hat. It was duller about the 'Bar 'N' I never could stand dullness. And so I came away. Leave it at that. I did not expect to find such friends where the Mounted Police would not be apt to look for me.

Every Indian in the foothills had long ago heard of the bank-robbers in Red Deer, and Joe Blue Goose's eyes widened with surprise and admiration.

"You were lucky," he said accepting the confession without question for he knew one had escaped.

"I trust my friend" said Blue Pete and closed his lips tightly.

"Joe Blue Goose's lips are more tightly sealed than ever," promised the Blackfoot. I have wondered. Blue Pete may. The half breed's hand raised warmly. "Light-in-Dark may trust me. It is as if he had never spoken. as if he was always Light-in-Dark. I have spoken."

So far so good. Blue Pete knew that now, unless something unfortunate happened, he was safe, so far as Joe Blue Goose was concerned. To almost any extent an Indian will protect another from the laws of the white man. Both felt better for the interview.

That they were nearing the home encampment Blue Pete sensed from the increasing slowness of their advance. The Indians appeared in no hurry, and as they moved along they tested more thoroughly the winter's prospect for fur. Each day the camps were more extended while the braves rode deeper into the mountains and hunted. After a night of howling protest from timber wolves Mountain Stream ordered a day's delay while they gave chase to the animals.

for wolf skins were valuable and the winter skins were almost complete. Here too were more plentiful and the offer of meat for the home camp kept the Indians busy for much of the day.

It was during one of these long tramps that a fatal tragedy occurred. Joe Blue Pete it is supposed a mystery whose explanation he did not have for several months.

Mountain streams always eager to perish his tank had penetrated some leepes into the heights to the west. He knew the lay of the land the home camp was not far away and he knew if a trail must be mountain goats in their nightly feeding on the forest slopes. It was a long walk and he set off long before daylight giving orders for the others to scatter through the nearby valleys and woods.

Not long afterwards Blue Pete started away. He had no definite goal in mind but he too struck westward. The district I suppose was new to him but he had no fear of losing himself. His inclination was always to turn his back on the mountains but his work was to be there and he faced North West and he made up his mind to account himself to the cold heights.

The ravine he followed at first presently widened into a deep cañon. A rushing glacier stream lined the bottom but there was sufficient foliage at the sides for his intended to get through and by keeping a watch on the cuts on either side he judged that presently the arroyo would widen and flow.

After a time however the roaring rush of the water irritated him it interfered with his hearing and so that he depended. With every other sound dimmed he felt uncertain, exposed and after revering for some time the feeling of helplessness it gave him he turned a little to the steep for the bushes and climbed to a higher level.

Throughout the morning nothing worth a cartridge offered but he thought after all of game he had other problems. Through he lost reasonably safe in Joe Blue Lance's hands he had little evidence of his own ability to witness to plan the job he had assumed. Playing Indian charmed him there was in his mind something dubious about it. And he knew his tendencies to break loose and release his feelings. He had left the part of racing over hills all day by day partly because nothing had yet been accomplished. In reality he need not have worried except for his own

suspense. There were many Indians no darker of skin than he and he had the right facial structure and hair & little white blood had at some time entered the veins of many Indians a rule of the days when white women were few.

Another cause for worry was the approach of winter. Not that he and his were appalled but that he knew that they would hunting him in his search. He had heard another Nez Perce stand off at the last till late in the fall and it had not left a pleasant memory.

He longed to get away before winter set in and the thought made him remember his search for Mica. For the first & last time little the returning trail took him through the same trail he had taken. Major Madsen and Inspector Barker. Never before had he felt so out of the world even during the months he had spent as an outlaw in the mountains. The winter solitude of the mountains had been a rough & trying ordeal - heights that threatened and a chillness over him. It seemed barren & bleak & I think that never before had weather frightened him. Now he had a premonition that the winter would exact a heavy toll of him.

Early in the afternoon it came to him that it would be unwise to return to camp empty handed. It would be not only with the reputation he had acquired and would perhaps arouse some suspicion. Accordingly he commenced seriously to look about for game.

To keep out of the way of the other Indians until he had something to show for his wandering he continued westward. Soon he found a hunting trail with a long glacier pointing directly at him. Since communication in sight he remained the while listening and watching. A number of times he came in bear tracks but not until mid afternoon did a fresh one appear and he set out along it. The glacier would be track to harbinger they must be taken now or these bears found.

For more than an hour he followed the trail. Suddenly the trees parted and he found himself in a wide open space that extended to a narrow bank of forest at the foot of a long open slope. The bear kept glancing in his face almost started him and he drew in looking about with some apprehension. The glacier before him appeared current enough to touch but he knew it was still many miles away.

* Blue Pine Cedar.

* Blue Pine Cypress.

and much higher [With a shiver he turned his mount back into the trees.

As he did so a rifle shot rang out from somewhere near the open slope. He knew Mountain Stream had gone in that direction, and a dozen Indians might be hunting, but the sound startled him. He sensed that it was not a hunter's shot and the blood raced through his veins.

From the echoless sound he gathered, too, that the shot was not fired among the trees. And toward the slope he had seen no sign of game.

With a jab of his heels he sent the broncho racing more deeply into the trees, and dismounted. Hurrying back to the edge of the clear space, he scanned the mountain-side.

He saw now what he had missed before or what had been invisible—a dark spot midway up the slope. As he watched, it moved, and sank almost out of sight.

He had to know more, and he got his broncho and raced forward keeping to the trees as much as possible. Presently even that cover ended.

He could see more clearly now. The dark spot was there still, a mere line against the slope. It was plainly a man lying down.

He spurred ahead.

As he did so an Indian rose into view above the tops of the band of trees that lined the foot of the slope. Climbing rapidly, he slunk from rock to rock, evidently seeking cover as he went.

The man lying higher up did not move.

Feeling that he would not be in time to prevent some sort of tragedy, Blue Pete, nevertheless, tore forward. He had still almost a mile to go. But the climbing Indian might still be intercepted before he could return to the cover of the forest.

"Gor-swattle. Gor-swuzzle!" he growled. "Ef on'y I had Whiskers!"

But the punto would have been of little help, and he knew it.

The general idea of the scene was apparent—the lower Indian was creeping on the one higher up. And it came to the half-breed that the stillness of that spot of dark on the slope was accounted for by the shot he had heard.

Holpless but frantically eager to do something, Blue Pete opened his mouth with the hopeless thought of making

himself heard of warning the running Indian off when a second Indian appeared on the northern edge of the slope. He was running by tree taking cover as he went. He dropped behind a rock and a rifle cracked over the top.

A shot rang out and a slight cloud of dust flared onto the air above the feet of the Indian who had been making his way up the mountain side.

Instantly the latter turned and plunged down the slope bounding along like a mountain goat to disappear into the trees.

The other Indian rose and watched the flight not offering to shoot again. Then he commenced to hunt. He went slowly, hesitating. Presently he stopped and looked about. The last Indian stood on the open trail long with parted lips panted and uncertain. The Indian saw him and hurried and ran. There was no hesitation about him now.

Blue Pete was bewildered. He knew only that the latest Indian had frightened off the other and had no idea presented the beginning of a haggard expression on the still figure just visible on the slope. But why had he run?

There was much to be explained and time he could not wait. In a few moments he reached the trail leaving the foot of the slope and there he stopped. The long bulk of the man lying far above him he pushed the cap to his brow and commented to himself. He was half right back to the bulk of it by a bullet passing close and made his shoulder and for a moment he lay upon his hand.

But he could not remain there. He had an idea that the man above him needed him, and quickly if he were not already dead. And so he took the rock and went on.

A second shot rang out sharply. But he knew it was foul at him. Had the Indian or had some last come to his protection as he had so claimed the man above.

Seeking what ever shelter he bounded rapidly. But he was afraid of the latter exposed and by the fact that there were no more rocks he decided that he was safe.

At last straining over a low rock he reached his goal. An Indian lay in a shallow depression. It was Mountain Man. And in the Indian's hand was a revolver pointing steadily. A crucial glancing turn to the chart's face made the revolver doubly dangerous.

CHAPTER XVII

PRISONER

HUH I thought to myself when I first heard it. You thought you could do better. You thought you were better than I was. You thought you were better than I could be because you were more. You first shot him to make him run so you could complete the job. I know you would. Well you will make me do a pleasant job. I always appreciated a job. But you will not.

A burst of pain suddenly started there and the gun wavered a little but the face remained grim and threatening.

It was now or never, and you are the bullet at me. There is no time to waste. You must do more, and they didn't even notice that enough for me to beat the bullet. You thought you were your brother then I say that no one would suspect him after shooting your gramps. It was very clever. But others too clever. You thought.

A spasm of pain seized his lips for a moment and his teeth gritted together again.

Now Duke stood staring at him lips parted. He did not understand that the world he saw the world had returned and he was of his mind. A wide red stain on the white beneath his shirt, but he had lost much blood and the squeeze of gas seemed to give the injury unless he became less pain with something of a rest. I saw he might stand at any moment and the hand that held the gun while it shook a little would lose the bullet from its range.

The last bullet which I aimed in slow deliberation. A bullet which I thought never known that he would have to shoot to save himself. He could not bring himself to that.

I think I was scared for him. I was miles away when the last shot was fired. I heard it and was very young then though I had no idea of what was then I was nervous climbing up trees and I knew what he planned to do. I came then as fast as I could. But I could not have gone faster without the aid of the trees on the side and frightened the other off with a shot. That was when one of the shots did not come near you. The next one was fired at me while I was climbing lower and then the last one scared him away again. I suppose for there came no more.

Mountain Stream's features wrinkled with the vision of drowning. There was a short burst of might. He braced himself against exhaustion. "I'm not done yet back—perhaps at first." Then a pause again when it seemed stale.

"If I had tried to murder you . . ." Blue Pete began. Then he stepped forward. A film had gathered over Mountain Stream's eyes and the gun dropped from his hand as he sank limply back against the rock.

Blue Pete had never run so long for his pulse. It did beat strongly and he wiped the sweat under the shoulders and propped him against a rock. He buried the sun and his back. It had passed bleeding, and there was nothing worse than death. Shaking the bone, another wave washed over his shoulder, his spine, his arm, his shoulder.

He went on, and last, looking off the east, he felt he often forgot the two bushmen who had involuntarily come and gone, and bent down to stir the fire on protecting a wounded man. His one thought was to get himself back to his men, the attention they would know what to do.

He saw his thoughts and with some difficulty raised the chair across the animal's shoulder. Then, leaning into the saddle he lifted the unconscious man over his thighs and set out for the camp.

He had not gone far when Joe Blue Goose rode from the trees and joined him. Blue Pete said the ship was far as he knew it. "It's Nathan I shot him," he protested.

The Blackfoot nodded very grimly for a few moments. Then what had happened to you when he was born. I cannot help you. I know of what you have told me what took all him I suppose and you must have paid.

But when I dug him up I saw that I prove I didn't want kill him and Blue Pete in English.

The Blackfoot laid aside. He may die. Then may think you know he armed forever. You are a stranger. They know nothing about you, and they have done a hundred. We dare not tell them where we are. It is a case, I suspect.

It struck home. I could have him very soon. Joe an American. The threat was not to himself but to his job.

Then then we will know how did it. we not for Blue Goose and then would never rest till they killed you.

He saw then that the danger was not so much what they would do to him if they had him, but that they would always

be in his way if he can impeding him at every turn. "I'm goin' with yuh, he decided. "I ain't no good runnin' away from nothin'. I jes' got rambackshus wen I'm crowded. I break out an' do things. Yuh shud know that. He looked down at the maimed body before him. He ain't goin' to die, not Mountain Stream ain't. I gotta show him I didn't do it."

Joe Blue Goose was thinking. "The other Indians—who were they?"

Blue Pete scratched his head thoughtfully. "Gor-vennahr. I was бергитин'! I do know a thang bout em. Funny, that, too."

"The one who fired at Mountain Stream— I understand why he ran. But the other?"

Blue Pete could only shake his head. "Has Mountain Stream got an enemy like that? Ain't the Indians here most Wood Cree? What's it mean?"

"I d. not know. I came only two days before you."

Blue Pete's eyes focused on him with sudden interest. "Then you're a stranger here jes' like I am. Why they so friendly with yuh?"

The Blackfeet made no reply. His mind was on other things. "The second he ran you saw he ran too, when he saw you?"

"Shure did an' some runner. But he come round later an' skinned off the fast one ag'in wen he shot at me."

A suggestion of a smile flitted across the Blackfeet's face. The half-breed saw it and wondered what it meant.

Nevera, the Indians had returned to the camp before them. They saw the pair of riders coming and hurried to meet them, exclaiming at sight of the still unconscious chief. They eased him to the ground. Blue Pete stood by, eager to help if there was anything he could do.

Examination revealed the fact that the bullet had entered the wounded man's shoulder a soft-nosed bullet that had torn a nest hole. But the fact that Mountain Stream still breathed with reassuring regularity proved that no vital part had been struck.

The moment the wound was found three of the braves hurried off into the forest. In a few minutes they returned with their hands full of small fragrant leaves. These they applied to the wound in the upper chest and back and the chief's arm was bound tightly to his side. The bleeding had long since ceased, but so much blood had been lost that it was hours before the chief returned to consciousness.

He stood up on Blue Pete's back with it was over him and for several moments they stared blankly into the half breed's face. Then they moved slowly off to the other group I about him.

"Huh." It was a weak grunt and the chief could hardly even hear his head poking in an effort to recall what had happened.

Presently he stood up once more and he took hold of one of the men. "I'm glad you got him," he intoned nodding toward Blue Pete.

The Indians stared at one another. One said, "He brought you up. He found you wounded lying on the mountain side."

"You must have got there in time to take him by surprise. It may be that we take him away and see that he does not die."

Joe Blue Horse beamed them apart and tried to explain. "You know Light-in-Dark could have done this. I sent him only a ten minute ride from here. He had Mountain Stream and me the whole way and saw him. He has armed him on his back along the mountain side and had brought him up his horse the rest of the way. All the time he was a stranger from the other side that Mountain Stream. Mountain Stream does not understand. All he saw was Light-in-Dark. Coming up to rescue him he did not see who shot him. It is not reasonable to think Light-in-Dark could have done this. Mountain Stream is wrong. When he is stronger he will understand."

The Indians sat plain, without comment. At the end one said, "Mountain Stream has given his orders. Light-in-Dark must stay and I we know."

The Blackfeet saw that for the time being it was useless to try to reason with them. He will not try to escape. He is willing to wait until he is proven not to be worth the guard.

"He went to [O a. Dye, who about awaiting their decision.] "Then must order the orders of their herd. But I fear there may be one up to make sure you do not escape. There is nothing more I can do."

An angry light flashed in the half breed's face and was gone. He was not afraid. He knew that if the most eager to the west he would find some means of escape. And he needed the friendship of these people. To escape now would make every Indian in the foothills his enemy. He would be a hunted man with everything and everyone blocking his every move.

"Wen Mountain Stream gits outa it he'll see I cudn't 'a' did it. Tel 'em I won't try to git away, I cud a did that long ago ef I d wanted to. I cud 'a' lef Mountain Stream whar he was an' he d a died fer share 'fore they'd 'a' found him. No use telin' em that now, so do waste yer breath."

The Indians were evidently uneasy about it. They had come to like and respect the half-breed and they knew that they were in his debt. They saw, too, that the story he told was reasonable. But the chief's orders must be obeyed. They retired to talk it over.

It was finally agreed that Blue Pete should hand over his guns and his knife, and that until they reached the home camp he should ride and sleep between two braves. But for the present they did not bind him.

CHAPTER XIX

A FRIEND IN NEED

THAT night he slept with two pair of Indians on either side, while two more kept watch beside the camp fire. He slept well, however, with the thought that on the morrow the chief would see how reasonable he was.

But the following day there was no sign of relenting and with their prisoner well guarded they set out on the final stretch to the home camp. The expression on Joe Blue Goose's face proved that nothing had occurred to improve the situation.

Blue Pete commenced to worry. He felt certain that, as yet, they planned no physical harm to him, but he would have to abide their pleasure and he saw that proof of his innocence would be difficult to find. Only two Indians could supply that proof. One would be certain to keep out of his way while the other had exhibited unmistakable signs of wishing the same thing. Even were he free to search for them, he would not know where to go, nor would he recognize them if he came on them.

Mountain Stream insisted on riding his own pony, sitting straight and steady in the saddle, but it was clear that he was in pain. The evidence of suffering had its effect on his followers, and Blue Pete found himself left coldly alone, except for the silent guards.

In the early evening this was had the house completely. A ridge had gone ahead and the entire camp was ordered to remove them. It did nothing to reassure the half-breeds that these savages were uniformly hostile though they made no threatening move.

The arrangement of the camp here I might state he had seen not a hundred yards to the south and even those they had passed during the last few days the huts were arranged in a regular fashion in a cluster or open space in which a small brazier had been lit to be the fire. Left to right other pines joined throughout occupying a greater extent than the ridge. These were low logs too as Indian staves and those in evidence were higher ones. In front the was the usual litter of broken and foul pieces of garbage and dried fishes. Both the sections were apparently to be arranged according to a general plan.

I Blue Pete's name is now more than the personal name but emblem. It was established by his great reputation and he knew he must be with us that would be safe.

The huts were built of logs the thicker in the bunks and supplied by the usual poles to support the thatch in the sun and the heat and storms of summer. The logs of the smaller size were selected especially the openings between those of the larger to be as high as four feet. They had the thatch a dozen feet high. A gravelled walk had been made back from about the open spaces with four paths at right angles leading to the chart's side.

An Indian Indian an implement enclosed and the like from the Indians in the person of a woman.

For the former being all bent of bent nothing to him as passing the water across from him to be measured or tested.

Without so much as a glance at his people the had made through them and was saved from the saddle before his own when Blue Pete was led forth to a place in the outer stable and the Indians were set at guard at the door.

The had turned about the camp in which he found him self. I was a mass of a single man with his usual openings in the walls of various windows. Holes made between slabs were propped against the walls beneath the openings evidently intended it over them to keep out the cold and storms. The openings were much too small to offer any chance of escape that way.

That did not trouble him.

What did trouble him was that for the next three days he saw nothing of Joe Blue Louse. He was allowed outside the fort but was not permitted to wander beyond the outer circle of huts, and always the two Indian guards remained at his side. It was just as though Morgan's strength was not even sufficient to defend. The one hope of release was the Blackfoot and for a greater part he was in the camp.

He had not dare to make inquiries but on the third day he saw Joe Blue Louse no longer. His guards however would tell him nothing but that Joe Blue Louse had gone with the men, saying that he had gone for good. In his anxiety Mike Little asked to speak to Morgan again but this was denied him.

Impatient he looked about for some means of escape. His guns had been taken from him but every Indian had a rifle and most of them no slaves. I soon himself at their expense presented little difficulty but I could get to them about

Warren appeared ready to break however and he could not afford to wait. The Indians themselves were preparing for a repacking. Hurriedly the wall building protection of the ponies and even the horses and the traps. It was deeper still the mountain to provide meal for the young horses.

Several hours passed and still no change or no indication except that his guard to his eyes those young and silent presenting the rations and heating it on him. Everything and every one seemed to be against him. Nothing as yet had occurred to suggest his rescue and the Agent was gone and he had no knowledge of what had happened to Joe Blue Louse. Now that the Blackfoot was gone he had no friends. He had resolved on keeping in touch with Joe, in the hope that sooner or later he would be sent to the falling place of North Wind. Now the promise of that was gone.

The night he lay in his spider bed wide awake and restless. His thoughts were on the usual places one by one before the door. The other was silent across the hall somewhere in the dark a rifle a few steps away. It was a dark night and the trappers had been setting before the openings in the walls so that only a few rays from the moonlight outside filtered through the unglazed cracks.

—The light was not so dark. His strayed eyes were almost unable to see in the dark. That did much to his disquiet. A fresh bed had been made for him, and the cracks of the new boards betrayed every movement

As I recited so low along the edge of the bed and lay there.

There had nothing been that was unpleasant. The two guards had made themselves as comfortable as they could. The arrangement being that one should sit at the head of the bed and the other at the foot. In this case the guard at the head of the bed was a young man, about twenty years old. The guard who sat at the foot of the bed was a tall, thin, elderly man. The height of the bed was such that the guard at the foot could not reach the top of the bed without stretching his neck. He could not sit upright in the bed, and the effect of this was to make him look like a dog lying down, with his head raised and his body curled up.

He lay, however, with his back to me, looking out through the window at the scene outside. The scene outside was all the beauty of a tropical garden in the dead of night. But it was not the beauty of a tropical garden in the dead of night. They were the flowers of the garden of the dead. It was the garden of the dead, the garden of the dead, the garden of the dead.

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In a screech, such as reached the chief's bed, and was repeated again and again, the boy

around to the shaded side hugging the walls. A dog somewhere whined sleepily and Huu Pete's teeth bared.

Knocking the door of the cabin he listened. He had no idea of the size of the interior but by the size of the building he suspected that it contained more than one room to ensure the chief privacy.

Once before he had entered a churf a house by night but that time it was a tepee and the outcome of the visit had been a crush of the skins of which the tent was made almost smothering the churf and his squaw.¹ There had been no difficulty in entering there and he knew that an emergency he could not be won to anywhere. He had been after his game and as he stood listening now he wondered if his bow and quill might not be inside the walls because bare. The thought stiffened his purpose.

Carefully testing the latch he found that it worked noiselessly and he opened the door and entered.

To his surprise the room was flooded with moonlight. It entered through a window of glass in a side he had not before seen. In the centre of the room was a long table its sides lined with home made benches. But what interested him most was a rack of rifles on the wall opposite the door. But his own rifle and revolver were not in sight.

Closing the door he examined the weapons more closely, and found them all rusted. A .45 Winchester he took down, and turned to face a doorway that led from the hall. It was covered by a dark blanket and from beyond came a gentle sobbing. With his ear close to the blanket he listened. There would probably be a squaw with the churf and he feared her more than the churf for a squaw's sense of protection was keen.

Keeping his body well in the opening to cut off the light from the outer room, he drew the blanket back.

It was light enough inside to make out a huge brass bed piled with furs and beneath the furs were two forms. Neither had heard him enter for the sobbing now came from both. He stepped through and let the blanket fall behind him. The fall rattled merrily in the crook of his left arm and a slight smile tensioned his lips as he leaned back against the wall and waited.

The pair slept on.

Impatient the half breed drew the blanket back and let the moonlight slant in on the bed.

¹ *Huu Pete Pays a Debt*

BLUE PETE'S DILEMMA

It was the nurse who awakened him. Her head lifted and dried from the back of the bed and a pair of white eyes stared at him. She screamed then and then burst into single voice blurted out over his head — "The Blue Petre has left all the same time for a ride where she's gone to find him with the bear."

Blue Petre had not moved. The rifle uttered again and yet still he stood in the same place using armrests of the chair at his arms. He chuckled.

"I wonder that," he said in a low voice, "has always felt so much consciousness of the existence of Mountain Stream that since he has saved him he yet now through a present he has sent him no message when he had him at his service. Three times he could have taken him. It has been his wish to yet Mountain Stream accuses him of wanting it."

The square eastern wall around the bed and near a Indian name running. At the same time a prancing arrow from the bear where Blue Petre had buried his gun to it by removing the last of the feathers I perceived that he was the owner.

Light & dark might also have escaped he said. But he knew by this tale among friends. His master sleep. He walked out and he said them. He had quitted it again with Mountain Stream and had been refused. There was even this way of reaching the east. Then Mountain Stream still think him guilty. A thinking in idle.

This person had stopped his flight of sight and covered his head with the rug. But a low whisper of bear confirmed them again to the Mountain Stream addressed her.

The master just ignorant and seven hours entered three carrying others. The two great relevant reached in and stood with bowed heads before the bear. With a bow he looked them over ignoring the half buried. For several seconds no one spoke.

"Master! Mountain Stream raised his hand and pointed Take him back. If he escapes again it will not be well for you. In the morning I will speak."

Blue Petre stopped his ear and placed the rifle on the bed then with a bow he turned and walked from the bed followed by the two guards. He was not sure that he had done his duty any good but at least made Mountain Stream promise to those things see. And as rare he had said I said he said. If the children were not unreasonable there would be other means of escape and it was evident that no immediate measures against him were planned.

What we have done is to open up a whole new field of research. We now know that a new language can be learned at any age, and we can explore many other questions. For example, what would happen if one were to learn two languages simultaneously? Or, what would happen if one were to learn a language that was very different from his own? These are just a few examples of the many questions that remain to be answered.

The following is a brief account of the origin and history of the town of New Bedford, and the manner in which it was founded.

He was a good boy, but he had a bad temper. He got into trouble because he was always getting into fights. He fought with his brother, and he fought with his parents. He also fought with other children. He would hit them and push them around.

As the year 1865 was drawing to a close, the author had
been "thinking what he could do." He could not help
thinking of the sad condition of the slaves, and of their need
of help. He could not bear the idea of seeing a poor, naked
slave, lying dead, without something more to offer.

However, that's where the problem lies. That's why we would

Nothing else can make him understand — the torture and suffering of the last winter and present. Through the window again he saw that a light snow had covered all the land and all the houses. A shadowed place where he could see scattered signs that a storm approached. It threatened to break and he found it difficult to restrain his will from some sort of desperate action that would be sure to bring disaster.

There was trouble to be had over before he could hope to get away. The old man thought it a complete affront for his head to be shaved so close. It might have been. In addition he must shave again.

He continued to shave with his hands and something distinguished was happening in the village, and although he did not know longer he could tell that there was something he could not ignore. He turned his head to the right. The sun was low, the sky was darkening. A bright light came from the left, illuminating the foreground. It was a bright light, suggesting the dawn. There were moments and moments when it seemed as though the sun had already risen. The light was bright, but it was not the morning light.

The light was bright. Bright like the light upon the bright shore where the sun was rising, and the bright. Blue Peter looked around. The sun was almost at the horizon, the sky was clear, the atmosphere was bright. The brightness of the sun was blinding, but they continued to shave. More and more the sun rose. The bright sun was enough to blind a boy.

Blue Peter stopped shaving. He stopped the shave. The bright sun was against him, and more than he could bear. They stopped. There was a silence. Silence, a moment, and then, with all adjustment, the shave began again. The bright sun was still.

He shaved until the end. Having made the last cut of his shave in the bright sunlight. Blue Peter sat up and knew that he had succeeded. Not for the first time, he had a satisfied expression, a face with a certain dignity being formed.

The guards were armed and held a rifle each with bayonets. However, there was no surprise there for they were aware of the day and what it was to mean the day. But they never told them ever to shave.

The door opened. Outside the village camp appeared to be gathered. It was dark and cold outside and a little snow struggled through scattered trees. The opening of the door revealed who it was that the men stopped outside the doorway and pointed at him. Against the lighter outdoors Blue Peter could not distinguish his features. Then the Indian spoke.

I have brought good news. Light of Earth. It was just Blue Peter and he spoke in English. You are free.

Blue Peter stepped forward hesitatingly. He was bewildered and confused. What's it all meant? he asked.

"Mountain Stream knows, now, that it was not you who shot him."

All Blue Pete was conscious of was a feeling of resentment and indignation. "I took him a darn long time to find it out," he growled. "Gor-swizzle, anytime' mighta happened—an' purty near dad! I jes' don' like the way things bin goin' round here. Ef he d had any sorta common sense he'd 'a' seed it long ago. But then wotchu expec' from a darn . . ." He stopped in time, his antipathy to the Indians had almost broken into words.

"I proved it for him," said Joe Blue Goose.

"You? Wotchu know bout it, 'ceptun' wat I told yuh? He didn't b'leave yuh onest."

"I proved it," repeated the Blackfoot

"I don' see how yuh . . ."

But Joe Blue Goose had stepped back into the crowd.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FRIEND DISAPPEARS

THIE moon blanched out suddenly. The wind rose. Snow eddies whirled about the open space in the heart of the encampment. Blue Pete stepped into the open. At the back of the crowd he saw dimly in the darkness two Indians detach themselves and fade into the night. One was Joe Blue Goose.

Mountain Stream pushed forward then, the Indians parting to let him through. Wrapped tightly in a gaudy blanket, he stood with braced legs before the halfbreed. He bowed low.

"Light-in-Dark," he said, "did not speak with a forlorn tongue. We accepted him as a brother, and we should have known. The days when Indian tribes fought one another are past, and now the Peigan and the Blood and the Cree can be brothers. Light-in-Dark has proven himself a good friend and a great warrior, and our doors are open to him. This is his home."

Blue Pete tried to imitate the bow, feeling silly in the effort. The formality was typical of the Indians; they made a ceremony of the most ordinary events. But he saw how

much he might need their friendship and he swallowed his embarrassment and indignation and tried to accept without qualification the extended hand. The whole story he knew would spread through the camps and gain him a welcome wherever he went.

"Light in Dark has never been anything but a friend," he said. "It has pleased him that he was able to be useful to Mountain Stream. In English he growled under his breath. An el vuh don git outs here proutn an lea' me alone! Li bate muh name is ver neck yuh damned Nache."

Mountain Stream issued a sharp order, and the two guards emerged from the hut and vanished. With a wave of his hand he swept the other Indians back. Then he removed the gaudy new blanket from his own shoulders and placed it over his late prisoner's.

"Winter is here," he said. "There will be more blankets for our new friend and many furs. Tomorrow my men will seal every crack in the hut so that Light in Dark may be comfortable through the long season of cold. Wood for his fire will be brought and a squaw will do his work for him. Blue Pete will remain through the winter a great hunter to hunt with us. There is game for his rifle and fur is high in Edmonton. In these northern mountains is more and better fur than he ever knew in the south."

Without waiting for a reply, he waved his men away and strode after them leaving Blue Pete more too happy about it all. As he turned back to the hut he remembered that he had no gun and he swung about and made for the chief's hut. As he reached the door voices from within reached him. The chief was speaking.

"If it had been otherwise it would have grieved us. Light-in-Dark has been a real friend, and we need his rifle this winter."

"It is exactly as he said and as I told Mountain Stream." It was the voice of Joe Blue Goose. Had Mountain Stream not been so badly wounded he would have understood. But when one is wounded almost to death his mind is not clear. Everything seemed to be as he saw it. It has taken much travel and time and trouble to bring proof, but, I have done so."

"It is well," declared Mountain Stream.

Blue Pete moved away. It would not be well to be caught

windropping and he could afford to wait. But he wished to speak to the Blackfeet and with that in mind he walked around the corner to wait for him to leave the hut.

A few minutes later the door opened. Blue Pete did his turn around the corner. The Indians left the cabin but the storm was now too thick to distinguish them and he dare not take a chance. Joe Blue Goose was probably one, but who was the other?

As he passed over it the pair disappeared. For a moment he considered following them but then Joe Blue Goose would know he had been listening. It would be held against him. In the end there would be time enough to find out what he wished to know.

After waiting where he was for several minutes he approached the door again and knocked. Mountain Stream's voice bade him enter and he pushed the door open.

Inside he found springtakal Light in Dark in a blanket with nothing to hold with a brother without his own thoughts. Mountain Stream has forgotten.

The chief at first answered in the unknown bowed and disappeared into the other room. Through the blanket that had been caught back Blue Pete saw him kneel on the board floor and crash beneath the bed. With the rifle and both revolvers he returned and held them out.

"It is the shame of men who so unmercifully misunderstood his be other that the guns were ever taken from him," he spoke guard. He pointed to the filled rack on the wall. "If there is anything more Light in Dark has but to help himself."

Blue Pete grinned happily as his hands closed on the familiar weapons and he shook his head. "Yuh sun' got nothing like these," he commented in English. "I'd stack em up in yer bull berries. Yuh think yuh're a long 'un' mounted but you ain't one till let a lead from any one o' these air yuh it jus' a dead Neeche."

He remembered this and thanked the chief in his own language.

In a few minutes he was back in the hut where he had so recently been under guard and almost before the crunch of the new spruce brought ceased he was sound asleep.

He awakened early with a driving urge in his mind. For a time he lay wondering what was so urgent then he remembered Joe Blue Goose.

BILLIE PETER'S DILEMMA

He remembered now with deepest abhorrence that he had left only a mid-winter at that time about the Blackfoot a companion thought it was apparent enough that it was through him the girl had run. Thinking it over he could not see that he could be sure he but the Indian who had been so anxious to get away the moment he saw Billie Peter.

During the days of his greater suspense he had often thought over the scene there on the mountain side. He would be murderer interested him little Indian braves were not unfeeling. Mantis however had spoken in evidence of the disappearance of the old-time Indian braves but in a modified form then still existed now between individuals rather than between tribes. The Indians were as unaccustomed to applying their own penalties for violations of their laws as long as they could remember it from the Mounted Police and this when started fresh complete不知道 of the white man's laws was more & a cover for their sudden remissness against them though each succeeding generation accepted them with less disfavour.

It was the other Indian the one who had driven the would-be murderer off who had later come to the protection of Billie Peter who interested him most. Who had he turned and run? There was of course the possibility that he mistook Billie Peter for a friend of the other Indian but that was impossible because he had after fired a shot that had driven the first Indian off. It was all too strange.

It was so strange that he felt he must have the explanation without delay.

He was surprised on opening the door of his hut to see the amount of snow that had fallen while he slept. He had surely been aware of the wind but it had disturbed him little. The two blankets then had given him kept him too comfortable to care what happened outside. But now he found a bank of snow driven against his door part of it falling aside as the door opened. He kicked it out and let his shocked eyes wander over the spotless white.

Several hours about the middle of last night several at the same time a lot dark forms appeared. One or three of the Indians waved at him and he recognized but a glinting had told him that as yet no one had come or gone from the chief's cabin. It worried him though he could not understand why. Again he stepped outside and started around below the outer circle of huts.

As the rescuer of their beloved chief the attitude of the Indians he saw here had altered to a warm welcome. In the savanna was of Indians even hot as he neared it appeared to be aware of his presence and the doors opened to give greeting. To his surprise he felt his antipathy to the race lessening. A grin spread over his face as he went along.

This new friendship however held his attention lightly. His sole thought was to find Joe Blue Goose and demand the proof he had brought the evening before. He thought it unsafe to approach the Blackfoot openly. He counted each evening on him in the round he was making of the huts.

Presently he found himself around before his own hut and he had seen no sign of Joe. Passing through to the second row of cabins he repeated the circle still no Blackfoot.

Finally then he crossed the open space to Mountain Stream's cabin and knocked. The door opened suddenly so suddenly that he had a feeling that the chief had watched his movements ever since leaving his own cabin. The chief stepped outside closing the door behind him. No sign of friendliness showed on his stolid face.

"Light in Dark slept well?" he asked.

Something in the coldness of his manner, a wall against which he knew he would beat in vain, made Blue Pete's response short.

"Light in Dark always sleeps well because he has nothing on his conscience even when Mountain Stream thought him a murderer. It took much to convince him. Where I come from . . . He stopped in time. The proof that Joe Blue Goose brought I would know what it was. I have a right to know. Only two Indians—other Indians—were there. The one who shot you would never dare admit it. The other who is he?"

Mountain Stream straightened. "The proof was complete," he said, and closed his lips.

"Where is Joe Blue Goose?"

"Joe Blue Goose has gone—where he came."

"You mean back to Medicine Hat?"

Mountain Stream's eyes bored into him. "You knew he came from Medicine Hat."

"He told me so—I think I remember that." It was a narrow escape. He has proven himself a friend of ours, because he saved me from your cruelty."

"Huh!" The chief was silent for a moment. "It is strange that he should tell anyone but me where he came from."

Blue Pete thought quickly. "Perhaps I only thought it. I have met Blackfeet from Medicine Hat they have an encampment there. They have none in the southern foothills."

"What do you know about Medicine Hat?" demanded the chief.

"I have been through it nothing more. Once I went as far east as Winnipeg." He returned frown for frown. "What does Mountain Stream accuse me of now? Am I no longer his brother?"

"I—do not know." The Indian was troubled. "So many things have happened. It is wise to be careful. Joe Blue Goose is not of my tribe, neither are you. He has told me a story, you have not—not been frank." His face had become more grim. "Joe Blue Goose has gone."

He turned away. To the half-breed it was the end of everything. With the Blackfoot gone he was left without a plan, with no direction to take. The search might last all winter—and then fail.

He spoke quickly. "I would thank him for what he has done for me. I had no chance to do it last night."

Mountain Stream laid over his shoulder. "He is gone. When the storm has ceased for there is more to come—the big winter hunt will commence. Light-in-Dark will hunt with us. He will share our catch. My wound is almost better. Light-in-Dark and I will hunt together. I have spoken."

He entered the hut and closed the door.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FIGHT IN THE NIGHT

BLUE PETE wandered back to his hut and sat down to think things over. It was plain that he still was a prisoner of a sort. In the minds of the tribe, except for the chief he had been vindicated but Mountain Stream was more intelligent; he still saw reason for suspicion. That suspicion he himself had increased by his thoughtless directness in enquiring for the Blackfoot.

Mountain Stream had spoken the half-breed wist to hunt as companion. In other words Mountain Stream had made up his mind to keep an eye on his guest.

Even with the best interpretation of the dream it meant delay. And already he had spent almost a month in trudging wandering and winter was a month on them. He ground his teeth together and fingered his 45 carbine.

A squaw entered and started to prepare his breakfast. He did not speak to her. All the rest of the morning he sat and brooded.

In the afternoon he set out once more to circle the camp. The Indians had not yet set out for the hunt waiting for the coming storm to have the "out before setting their traps. When they did start he would be forced to take his share. As he went along he kept looking for tracks leaving the camp and at a point not far from his own hut he found them. far away into the forest.

Tinging with hope that there would be there for him later he lay down naked and slept.

He had gone carefully through his pack sack and now he fastened under the straps his warmest blanket the new one the chief had given him as proof of their continued friendship.

He had no ammunition however and no food. The latter he knew he could pick up somehow as he went along but shells for his gun he must have and he had failed at the time to notice that Mountain Stream had not returned his ammunition with the gun. Somehow he must secure a supply.

It meant a raid on one of the huts, and that would be dangerous and certainly not improve his relations with the tribe. The chief's hut and his own were the only ones he had been in but he knew that the other huts would probably be single rooms like his own. But they would be rammed with Indians. He had seen where the chief kept his arms and there lay his best chance. Muskets and powderhorns, too, he must have for he could not get along in the snow without them. Two pairs of shoes hung in his hut so that he need lose no further for that essential part of his equipment. Muskets of the proper size would be more difficult to find for his feet were larger than the Indians.

He thought of the broncho he had brought now established with the Indian ponies in satisfactory shelter. He had grown

kind of the animal but he would have to leave here one could not get about in the snow on horseback. The Indians would look after him for their own sakes. If the time came when he required a mount he could easily steal him back.

Opening the door of the hut he looked out here for the distant howl of a mountain lion; everything was still as death. But as he stood listening the wind howled unceasingly into his ears and he knew the threatened storm was near.

As he wiped the flakes from his face he learned he saw a movement across the open space between the huts. His hand had blenched his eyes at the moment so that he could not be certain but by the tingling in his veins he knew he had not been deceived. Gliding along the wall of the hut he turned the corner and was led.

For a long time nothing happened. Impatient he set off around the circle between the rows of huts keeping his eyes about him to avoid waking the dogs that were curled now, he knew, in the snow.

Through the open spaces between the huts he spent a few moments looking as he came to each but still everything was as it should be.

He had completed half the circle when a figure darted across the open space not far from where he stood running directly for the chief's hut.

Blue Pete turned and retraced his steps until he reached a point where the chief's hut screened him from where he thought the intruder had taken shelter in the shadow of the wall. Then he too ran swiftly across and crouched beneath the overhanging roof.

He was at the back of the chief's hut. He had no exact idea of where the night visitor was, and he could not guess who it might be but he knew he had no right to be there. Whatever the fellow had in mind required investigating.

Holding his breath he listened. From within the hut he could hear the fast breathing loudly but from outside came no sound. He stood with his back to the wall so that his crooked eyes scanned every direction before and at both sides, in case the unknown came suddenly around a corner. His bag empty though it was he had forgotten that was ready.

Spur a vast silence. Almost trembling with the strain of waiting and listening he set out to investigate. Cautiously working along the wall to the corner, he saw that on that

and the way was clear. He went on. At the front corner he stooped low against the ground, and slowly advanced his head.

The blood leaped in his veins when he saw a man crouched close against the door, evidently listening. His back was to the half-breed.

Blue Pete straightened, took a long breath, and started forward. The soft snow gave no sound. He was half-way to the door when the man turned. Then he was off like a deer.

He was not swift enough. In a few long leaps Blue Pete was on him, crashing him into the snow. His hand pressed tightly over his mouth. He need not have taken the precaution, for the Indian showed no disposition to make an outcry; additional proof that he was a trespasser. But he did fight, and desperately. His teeth clung on Blue Pete's arm in the struggle. They penetrated no farther than the leather, but before the half-breed wrenched himself free and struck. The man's head dropped backward, and he lay limp.

For a few moments Blue Pete lay beside him, wondering if the fight had aroused the camp or the dogs. But in the snow they had made little noise, and neither had uttered a sound. Now, then, he jerked the man upright and let him fall over his shoulder.

As he crossed the door of his own hut behind them a dog whined and barked nervously; several more gave tongue. It would be sure to rouse some of the Indians, but he and his victim were safe. He dumped the man on the ground, tied him swiftly in the dark, and hurried to the door to watch through a narrow crack.

He was exulted and happy. It was not that he had perhaps once more saved the chief's life or that he had won a fight; but that his hands had told him that the ammunition he required was now his for the taking. A belt and a shoulder-strap on the unconscious Indian were packed with shells, and he knew they were of the proper calibre. Further investigation discovered two pockets filled with the same sort shells.

The sound of a door opening somewhere warned him that the dogs had been heard, but he had no fear of discovery now. Indeed, the barking of the dogs would be a warning, for if the Indians searched now, and found nothing, they

would not be alarmed when his movements again disturbed the dogs.

In the dark he removed his rifle & the axes. They were too small for combat but they would have to serve until he could obtain better. The snowshoes he had selected from the three pairs hanging on the wall he took down and strapped a pair to his pack sack. As yet the snow was not deep enough to need them. Then rifle in hand where the dogs still barked persistently he peeped from the hut leaving his rifle where it was the sun part of everything he could use.

As he crept back through the two or three of hours the dogs increased their clamor but half heartedly and in a few minutes he was clear of the encampment.

He had set out without a definite plan beyond the fact that he would work around the camp to the trail left by Joe Blue Couse and his companion. In the snow this would be easy to follow. Even in the night he could find it though it would be necessary to await daylight before following it deep into the forest. At any rate by the time the Indians were about he would be miles away.

It was not difficult to find the trail at the edge of the clearing and he followed it into the trees. In a thicket the snow had failed to penetrate he lay down on the blanket he had brought and slept.

His first race of walking was to make sure once more of the trail back tracking it to the encampment and from there he set out with a light heart.

He had gone only a few steps however when a disturbing thought occurred to him. Would the Indian he had left unconscious come to his senses and give the alarm? He decided against it. The fellow would be even more anxious than himself to get away unnoticed.

But who was he? He reproached himself for not having troubled about that before. He should have struck a fight and satisfied himself on that point. All he had thought of was the ammunition and necessities he furnished. Suddenly his mind flew back to the scene in the mountain side when Mountain Stream was shot. Now he had prevented another such attack, and had not bothered to see who had made the attack!

Could it be the same man in both attacks?

It struck him forcibly that it might concern him more than as a mere matter of identifying the chief assailant. So compelling was the thought that he turned back.

It was broad daylight now, and the Indians would probably know that he had run away. If he met them it would be difficult to explain, but his curiosity was too keen to think of that. He was almost within sight of the camp when a burst of rifle-fire brought him to a stop. Only for an instant, then he dashed forward. He was in time to see half a dozen Indians running about between the huts on the other side of the camp. From the forest beyond came another shot, and then every door in the encampment was open, with Indians rushing out, bearing rifles.

A few of those he had seen first returned, now, and an excited conference took place. At the end, a group set off through the huts into the forest, all of them armed.

It was not difficult to surmise what had happened. The Indian he had left unconscious had come to his senses. He had been seen making his escape, and was now being followed.

Blue Pete decided to do some trailing himself. He had to find out for himself who the Indian he had fought with was. It seemed very important now. Accordingly he set off around the camp through the woods, making for the direction the Indians had taken. He ran off at top speed, and presently he knew, by the sounds, that he was overtaking them. He found their trail, and rounded away from it. The Indians were advancing cautiously, evidently fearing an ambush. The half-breed delayed for nothing. He had put on his snow-shoes, for the snow was deeper.

CHAPTER XXII

AN OLD ENEMY

BLUE PETE was uneasy. He knew the risk he took, both from pursued and pursuer. But something else weighed on him and he did not stop to work out what it was. When, however, he reached a more open part of the forest he understood. The sky was heavily overcast, sure warning that the storm was very near.

It came to him, with a shock, that the snow would wipe out the Blackfoot's trail, and once more he would be at a loose end. With the thought he turned back. To find Joe Blue Goose was the more important thing to do.

He went at full speed recklessly thinking only of the threatening storm. Only his brothers saved him that and the protective instinct that warned him of danger. He had for the moment forgotten the Indians and he almost ran into them. The sound of low voices immediately before him sent him hurrying to one side to take shelter behind a shrub.

The Indians however saw his tracks paused for a few moments and set out after him. Without wasting time more Blitz Pete started away keeping the shrub between him and the Indians.

They saw him and a cry went up. It is probable that in the heat's glamour they had of him they took him for the other Indian for the cry was repeated from the camp and two or three shots were fired at him.

Thereafter he had to depend on his brothers of fact though he paused long enough to return a single shot over their heads to drive them. Thereafter they would advance more cautiously giving him time to get safely away.

It came to him as before that he had added complication to complication and he knew no way to face them but to flee. He had left the encampment with no thought but to find Joe Blue Green in the hope that the trail would end at North Wind. He saw now that sooner or later the Indians would have found his trail and set out after him, convinced that his effort to escape unguarded failed. Now he did not know what was best to do. If he retreated after Joe Blue Green they might suspect what was in his mind and intercept him making more difficult for the Blackbird's destination. For he fully believed Mountain Stream knew the purpose of Joe Blue Green a prisoner in the foothills. The Indians might be at the end of the trail to receive him.

His one chance was to out distance them and with that in mind he increased his speed.

For a time he forgot the threatened storm, but the rapidly growing darkness reminded him and the sudden whine of the rising wind in the tree-tops and the cold touch of the first snowflakes sent him hurrying on.

He greeted the storm with a low groan of disappointment. It would take little time to cover the trail he followed and recklessly he cut back closer to the encampment. Three dogs raced at him snarling at his heels. He would have shot them, but for the fact that it would do him no good, and only

He knew the vicinity of the Indians against him, it would be well to allow them an opportunity to go back home.

He was about to start without telling wife, but he had time enough to think, and the same that in a very few hours it would be wiped out.

Now, he was not to blame for the Indians would be free for him. However, he could not wait for the next day, so starting them off, he took his gun and started to do what he could. What a good start he might have had, had the other been there.

In a short time the train stopped so that he was forced to get off and walk along. When he reached another track a station, and he saw the Indian. And then the same two Indians from whom he had taken his gun, and the gun which had been so different. He was surprised to see them alive.

A shooting would have followed, but he knew that had upon himself to shoot his passengers. So instead, while there lay just by the track, he stopped to speak to the men, for after a man of Indian origin and friends. Hearing over them, he left his gun at the station, and started walking over a log at the end of a bunch of burning brush on the other side. Later he was over again, these Indians, by getting a long bough and carrying burning brush, laying the same down over the smoke before igniting the ground.

All four of us, he when would leave the Indians for safety, about one hour, were back, however following a trail to the Indians' home during the past hour.

The woman was lazing over in a thick sagebrush and he told again that he must be at least in an appropriate position. So that again, his thoughts rested on the Indians. From the direction the two had taken he knew the Indians had this particular bough in the possession, and he knew that this was something keeping the water provide of his to come on the trail where the same was kept from all by surrounding trees.

Indians had not been going about over a wide area, and he remembered the Indians. Turning back within sight of the timber, from that had been his home he kept on for a long time, and thought that the person he had called the Indians directed by the others, and go his bad home.

Once more he set up another fire. The stars had no moon, and with the approach of evening the temperature dropped rapidly. He commenced to think of some place to spend the

fright, some shelter where he might escape the storm. The deepening snow itself would protect him from the cold.

Suddenly he pulled up and listened. Above the storm a sound had reached him. A twig had distinctly snapped. He edged away and waited. Another snap but nothing more. It passed him. Then in the timber limit made from which the sound had come he knew his trail would still be distinct enough and whether animal or man the trail was being followed by someone or something he could not see. It could not be the Indians; they would make more noise and they could not have passed him for the sound was before him now.

He stood hesitating.

Definitely the sounds came from the direction of the trail he must have left. He turned in nearer and kept pace with them.

He knew the track he took. With the ground covered with snow he could not hope to continue far without some betraying sound. The snow while deep enough to conceal the ground beneath would not deaden the sound of a broken twig just such sounds as he had heard. And he knew the unseen thing in there was trying not to make a noise.

Too distant from the blaze to see through the storm, after a time he grew impatient and worked his way nearer. For a time he heard nothing further. It made him anxious—reckless. Had the man there in the clearing of the blaze—for he was certain now it was a man—heard him, and stopped to wait for him or had he got too far ahead to be heard through the storm?

He hurried on.

The warning sense of immediate danger brought him up sharply and he stood looking about trying to see through the storm. Before him the clearing of the timber limit led through the fall snowfall and for a time he could see nothing in that direction.

Suddenly a blast of wind cleared a space before him.

In its heart stood an Indian staring straight at him. A rifle was in his hand and it pointed at the half buried

Too quick for thinking, Blue Pete threw himself to one side, as the bullet went whistling over him.

He had his own revolver out, an automatic movement, but he had as yet no way of knowing if the Indian was friend or foe. Anyone might shoot under such conditions. It might indeed, be Joe Blue Goose himself. He had to be sure.

For a few seconds he lay still, then started up on hands and

knees, moving along parallel with the blaze, trying to find an opening in the storm, thinking to get nearer from another and safer direction. At any rate, he had to be sure before he would shoot.

Not a sound reached him now but the howling of the wind, and after a time he rose to his feet. Where he stood among the trees the snow fell less thickly than in the clearing, and he could see, with a fair amount of definition, right up to the timber blaze. There he waited.

Suddenly from the mist of snow the Indian came into view. He, too, had shifted his position. Now he was forty yards away, his back to the half breed. And he, too, was listening. Blue Pete waited to see more clearly.

The Indian turned slowly, caught a glimpse of him and leaped behind a thicket with a startled cry. Blue Pete recognized him—the bank robber!

CHAPTER XXIII

* * * RESCUED *

THE thought that had made him hesitate to use his gun was not consideration for human life. It was no sudden tenderness or reluctance to treat the Indian as he deserved. Rather, it was disgust with himself for being so blind and careless. The light of a sudden revelation crowded from his mind, for a moment that might have been fatal, the threat of that hostile gun.

He saw it all now. The Indian he had fought beside the chief's cabin, whom he had carried to his own hut and kept there in the dark without troubling to see who it was, was the one who had already tried three times to kill him. Obsessed with blood-lust—it never died out in brutes of his type—he had thought he saw a chance to complete the murder he had attempted that day on the mountain-side. He had dared to sneak into the camp and right to the chief's door, and only Blue Pete's fortuitous intercession had prevented the murder. Yet, with the Indian in his power, he himself had thought only of his own need of ammunition and necessities!

What had happened after he left the camp he could envisage. The Indian, on coming to his senses, had released himself

he remembered how ashamed he had found him and discovering that he had not slept and therefore had not had time to sleep. "I have come to one of the hills the Indians had started after him.

He was still interrupted, answering the Indian's question, the sage was getting impatient evidently. He had succeeded in throwing his thoughts off his topic and different in the statements he made he had to the sage almost silent and picked up Blue Pete's tail.

It occurred to the Indian that possibly the Indian had not known fully as he seemed to have been found in the hills but fearing the anger of trying to say anything about it had been silent until now upon which the sage, having said a great deal, turned to the Indian and asked him if he intended to approach the Indian language. Blue Pete said with the same dogged persistence he had displayed in attempting to return to camp when he had attempted to avenge what the half-breed had done.

The sage growled and the Indian's doubts were dispelled with a wave of anger through the half breed and he ran past him through the sage who he had seen the Indian. In the short time of a moment he struck him and he realized what a tyro the Indian was. The Indian he had never heard by name or even in the battlefield to the south¹ and it had always reflected bad names. To the sage he had run through all right that over a mile a distance, and later he had saved him from his path². But in that he made happen something for an entire afternoon.

The sage had settled down more quickly but there was another movement that affected him. Particularly in the think of the trees the sage was less blushing and he might be able to see her at. He preferred the shade to the sun as was most on the battlefield and with the sage was more shade.

His anger was caused him from the shelter of the thicket and beyond the tree coverings. The Indian had changed his position and was watching for him. And he was here and reflected anger. A frightening sight.

Blue Pete's tail turned to one side. It was too late. The Indian - who was his right arm, jerking the gun from his hand. But even so he set he managed to grab the gun with his left hand and he could shoot with either hand.

¹ Blue Pete from a Dene.

² Blue Pete Chillico.

³ Blue Pete Shoots the Dene.

But so falling he cracked into the side of a tree. It caught him on the shoulder so far and so suddenly. He did not hear the sound that struck at him.

He awoke in some sort of恍惚状态, from a bad dream. His first impression was of being very far from all warmth. He awoke, but could not tell with whom every shoting the noise of the lightning. He ate himself and he had not what had happened. The voices were familiar but not the words.

Then another a man and a woman, in hoarse whispers.

The sound was so faint that he reflected the source. A short time past on his head brought him to consciousness and instantly the whispering ceased. He opened his eyes.

The darkness of night still surrounded him and for a brief moment he thought the Indians had captured him and had carried him away to their camp. Then his eyes caught the window and he saw that the west was over the trees beyond. He hurriedly dressed and started.

He was on a thick bed of fallen boughs and beneath his head had been placed a steaming bottle of bear grease. A few feet away he noticed the skin was covered by a pair of blankets being from a strip that stretched from wall to wall. The skin he had heard had just come somewhere from the blankets. Now everything was still but by a flutter in one of the blankets he knew that it had just taken up place.

The room was warm and he tried to make out to himself that covered him. But his right arm was bound to his side and held in place by splints. He tried to rise to his feet but the movement was too painful and with a groan he dropped back again without moving anything.

Slowly, however, he awoke. His last memory before losing consciousness was of a bullet entering his arm near the shoulder, and of the young Indian struggling to avoid it. But his eye saw no splints and he had not heard that shot shot. His left hand fell at the very place in his head now covered with a bandage.

The Indian band rubber had done it. He lived finally through the final two months in the snow. But how had he managed as well as he did? Who had treated him and who were the past heroes the Indians?

Who's that? he called in time.

For a time no sound reached him then soft voice replied across the floor beyond the blankets and went outside with

opening and closing, the door. The edge of a blanket moved and a pretty Indian woman's face peered through at him.

Something about it brought a smile to the half-breed's lips. The softness of that dark face, a softness suffused with shyness and fear, made him think of Mira, his white wife.

He knew as little of women had ever spoken to her. His early life had been spent with his Indian mother in that far borderland but she had died while he was still young and he had gone out for himself. And it was after three years in a g. Mira! he had been as no one ever seen - so far as women were concerned. A roamer most of the time, a military roamer, tramping about the Montana Badlands until before the guns Langren, carbines and revolvers, and of other rustlers, he fled to Canada.

Nursed now in a hospital room by a pretty Indian woman, whom he hated Indians notwithstanding, was so far out of any picture he could have imagined that it seemed ridiculous. And so he grinned back at her.

"Where am I?" he enquired shakily. "And how do I come to be here? I remember a shot and a fall."

"Light is dark," said a soft voice, "was injured. He was brought here." She spoke like half-mad.

Blue Pete frowned. "You know my name?" He spoke now in the Blackfoot language. "Where am I?"

Her face brightened and she replied in the same language. "Blue Pete is safe here."

The surprise of it brought him up on his left elbow with a jerk but the pain of arm and leg and head were too much for him and he fell back to lie staring at her.

"You know me?"

The name must have slipped from her, for her hand flew up to her lips and a frightened look appeared in her dark eyes. She made no answer.

"How did you know my name?" he persisted.

"You...you spoke of it...you wrote unconsciously. The blanket started to fall out place."

"Don't go," he implored. "Surely you were told my name. Was it Joe Blue Goose? No one else here in the mountains knows it."

Her brow pinched. "Joe Blue Goose? Who is he? Her head shook and she vanished. Moments later the outer door opened and closed and Blue Pete knew he was alone.

He thought of dragging himself to the window. She had

probably gone to join the man she had been whispering with a few minutes ago. It was not far from home he would have recognized that voice. The effect of the walk would be good and the reason that his one chance for a rapid recovery was to be still. Because of that, it seems fair to break off on a point which his rescuers desired.

He examined his complaints and was surprised at their adequacy. Home-made and hand-hewn they were nevertheless what his rescuers wanted to hear.

What he wished him most was the precious delay the value bought by the rest on him. It would be weeks perhaps months before he could get out again on the trail. Inspector Barker had given him for his own shoulder and one more shoulder weeks and perhaps months in the mountains he hated and in the heart of winter. And Mary would not know! The path was interesting.

It seemed at any rate that he was safe for the time being and in good hands and the other man's comfortable presence had done him no harm. Hadn't he and his wife had arrived there and much more had been taken of his injuries than Jim Pigeon recovered in it? Certainly the broken bones he had seen and the man he had heard might not have injured him far. His hundred and eight, his friends would call for two more, at least. But the pretty little square was evidently not going to solve the mystery for him.

The front of the outer door open and someone moving about beyond the screen of darkness. Impulsively he fought against panicking but anxiety was too strong and he commanded to pull along the floor toward the blankets.

Suddenly they parted and the woman passed through. When she reached him under her she frowned.

Light enough with friends she repented. That was all.

Miss Pigeon groaned feebly and waved an apologetic arm. "He was a man who has friends are. Real friends would not keep him in the dark."

She reached for his bound hands. He was found lying under the shelter the further back. He was as if dead. In the cold he should not have frozen. Is it not enough?

The half buried head back to the bed of twigs. It is more than I can expect," he said. Who else can?"

Her pretty shoulders rose and fell. He was not sure. We are like. Light on Barker's friends. He is injured but if he keeps quiet as a mouse he will be fit again. In there more we can do?"

"I will not ask again," he professed. "But how did you come to find me?"

We heard him groan. We could see where he was first shot. He had crawled afterwards under the trees. It was that saved him from worse. Light-in-Dark is not light to carry.

"You did not carry much of me," he said, running his eyes up and down her small body. "You couldn't." Someone else.

"But I am going to ask no more." He groaned. "You think I'll be here a month?"

"It would not be safe to go sooner. When you are well you may go your way, whatever it is."

He saw her eyes fixed on him with pattering curiosity, and he looked away. He felt as if she would read the purpose of his visit to the foothills, and that must be kept a secret, even from friends like these.

You are a Blackfeet, he said.

"I speak Blackfoot well," she replied, "but I am a Blood."

"What is your name and where do you come from?

There is a Blackfoot encampment at Medicine Hat.

She nodded. "I have heard of it. I have never been there. My name? Call me nurse. I have fixed other broken bones. Yours are not too bad. The wounds themselves are nothing to you; they will heal in a few days. I had to dig the bullet from your leg. The bark of the willow tree and the clean air here are all that is needed. And Light-in-Dark is strong, so very strong."

"Not strong enough to stop a .45 and keep young, it seems," he groaned.

She stood watching him from between the blankets for a long time and he squirmed beneath her gaze.

"Light-in-Dark as an Indian may go anywhere," she remarked slowly almost as if to herself. "But you are not an Indian. Why are you here? You are a cowboy, I can tell by so many things."

He shrugged his one good shoulder, and flung out his left hand. "I have not punched for a long time—not as a real cowboy. I love hunting. There is game and fur here in the Rockies."

The woman sighed. "Light-in-Dark keeps his secrets." The blankets fell together behind her.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ENEMY AGAIN

DLINKS, the bear that followed he made little effort to find out more about her, though his curiosity increased after he heard a signal from outside at 4 she would go to the lake and stay there. After a few moments the door was left open and a man who entered with her followed however but he had been no match an stronger. There were even times when he thought he detected the presence of another in the room here and.

He was the only light back the sun used to look. But there trusted him and he left do nothing to kill that trust. It was one that he thought it was safe that was. For he did not know the meaning of others. What he did was what to do, was merely a matter of personal preference with little thought of right or wrong. But the Indians converted with the abn had done so much for him.

He transacted with himself about it. The intentions of the Indians were of course to have there might be several reasons for their desire to remain. That they let alone it was proved as well by the nature of the abn. That he was raised from an Indian environment he knew the there were no visitors. If the Blue Lagoon was mentioned in his talk he might not speak of the name like Mountain Home and his own might well find the best home and the Klamath would know that he did not stand so well with his former friends. He was sure Joe was still his friend.

The same reason might be behind the desire of the woman and her male companion not to be recognized. The woman of course as her lover could not help exposing herself.

In what he could see through the window as he lay he concluded that the cabin was well built in a gorge in the sage with to the higher mountains. It was not a new building it looked like a highly constructed cabin and not intended for winter occupation but it had been recently carefully sanded and tightened against the cold. It was the sort of cabin that might be thrown up by prospectors or timber cruisers. One thing was certain—that it was not easy to find.

The storm during which he had received his injuries had ushered in real winter but for the following course of weeks the cold was not extreme. Then came a worse storm than the first, a raging blizzard that whirled about the cabin and marked its power by the distant crashing of trees. Even there in the gorge the cabin roared. With the storm came zero weather.

The such it did Blue Pete was never really uncontrollable. The snow in the other portion of the cabin was kept burning steadily. It failed to send much heat to where the half-breed lay but he was tough. In time however inactivity made him more sensitive to the temperature and the sight of frost gathering on the wall near him made him wonder how bad conditions might become.

One night seeking mute comfort he burrowed deeply into the hidden depths of his bed. In the midst of the rustling noise he made the blankets parted and he could see someone standing in the openingavalanching trying to see what he was doing. He gave an sign that he noticed and presently one of the blankets was untied from the rope and dropped over him.

He chuckled to himself. Now when daylight came he would be able to see into the room beyond, perhaps even the Indian he had not yet seen but whom he knew to be there. But just before daylight the opening of the outside door wakened him and against the light he saw a man leave the cabin.

Ashamed that he had looked he turned his face to the wall. They had known that he was cold and to cover him, they had taken the risk of exposing what they wished so much to conceal. And the Indian had gone out into the cold before daylight rather than replace the blanket.

Blue Pete raised himself on his elbow. "Huh" he grunted. "take it! in me many I ain't broken no more." He spoke in English forgetting himself.

To his surprise the woman replied in the same language. "We didn't think we should see you out to look."

The half-breed whistled the soft chin teeth. "One word, I clean freeze. You speak English too eh? Good. Them Indians at the camp don't know him talk all we done please. Yuh kin bring yer friend back when it's cloudy. I ain't comin' out to get out in this cold. He mus' be clean loco. Get him back. I won't look."

"Thanks." The squaw hurried to the door, and went into the night one of the plaintive cries of the cougar. It was answered and after a time repeated from nearby. The woman opened the door, whispered to someone and two pairs of feet entered. Huie Pete turned his back and snuggled into the extra blanket.

A few nights later he wakened to a gripping sense of danger. As always, when he wakened his wits were instantly alert. He did not open his eyes immediately, but lay listening with bated breath. His first thought was of someone beside his bed, but in a moment he realized the threat was not so near. From beyond the blankets came the quiet breathing of two sleepers.

He opened his eyes.

It was a brilliant moonlit night, and everything on his side of the blankets was visible. For a time he lay listening. He could hear nothing to justify the feeling yet it remained, and increased.

He raised himself on his elbow.

From somewhere outside his keen ears picked up the low "crunch" of snowshoes. It came nearer step by slow step, moving so carefully and slowly. He followed it as it approached the cabin from the side beyond the door. It reached the door and stopped.

He had his gun in his hand. His first thought was to shout a warning to the sleepers beyond the blankets, but curiosity was too strong to act immediately. Warned by his call, the intruder would flee.

He raised himself against the wall so that his left hand was free to use the gun. A touch on the door latch would force him to cry out. Or should he drag himself to the blankets and be at hand to protect his sleeping friends?

The need for action of some kind made him take the gun in his teeth and change his position to enable him to creep across to the blankets.

The intruder had not yet moved from the door. Was he merely waiting to make sure that those inside slept, before opening the door and shooting them when they could not protect themselves? Or was it only some wandering Indian, caught in the forest by nightfall and wondering if the cabin was occupied?

Whatever it was, he could not risk neglecting every measure he could take. He edged across to the blankets, and was

trying to place himself in a position where he might draw the blankets aside and yet leave his one good hand free for the gun when the low crunch of the snowshoes moved on. They came toward the window of his room.

Blue Pete swung himself about. A slight shadow fell into the room. Swiftly he faced the window.

Against the mornlit outdoors the upper part of a head appeared. Against the light it was nothing but outline. A face was pressed against the glass.

The half breed's gun was still between his teeth for in turning he had to use his one free arm. He grabbed for the gun and the prop of his arm removed, he fell sideways.

It was well he did. A gun beyond the window roared. At the same time Blue Pete pulled the trigger. But he was in no position to aim.

The Indians in the other part of the cabin wakened with the two shots and leaped up.

The woman called. "What happened Light or Dark?"

The crunch of rapid retreat ing snowshoes was her answer. The outer door flew open, and someone rushed outside, working frantically to don the snowshoes always left sticking in the snow.

"Do let him get out after Sam, nobody, man," Blue Pete warned in English. "He'll be hidin' to shoot him."

The blankets parted. "You ain't hurt?"

"Kissed me---ag'in," chuckled the half-breed. "Reckon you'll find the slug in the bottom o' the wall over thar I fired back. Reckon he seed me an' it upset his aim."

The woman went to the window. "There's only one hole in the glass."

"Shure I don't shoot to kill till I know I wantsa . . . I couldn't at that time et I'd wanted to, not the way I was fallin'. Reckon I ain't no prize shot w'en I'm that way, an' gotta look after a leg an' arm. Never done much shootin' that way, never hadta."

The Indian who had gone outside was still working at his snowshoes.

"Stop him!" Blue Pete warned. "T's plumb crazy chanun' him at the night. He's jus' waitin' fer someus to try it. Quick, stop him."

The woman hurried to the door.

"Tell him!" Blue Pete called after her. "I'll git the think myself some day. I do want nobody to fool me on that."

He's a few jobs it was me he shot at. Nobody yet there had at me an got way with it for long. Sod's. I wants till I've so to his face.

CHAPTER XLV

A CURIOUS FRIEND

THE affair puzzled Blue Pete. That the midnight visitor had once resolved to kill him or the Indian in the other part of the cabin was certain. Murder was in his mind, or he would never have come at such an hour and with such tumultuous. Besides, he had fired point blank.

That he could not have recognised Blue Pete in the moment he had while looking through the window was almost certain, but that he expected to find someone to shoot was equally certain.

The mystery of his new friends might explain the visit. Was it revenge for something they had done? Had they made enemies in their camp or in another tribe? Perhaps the woman was the cause of it; she was pretty enough for that.

There might however be another explanation. The bank robber. That the Indian would never be content until he had avenged himself on the half breed was certain. But if all were the best had he discovered where Blue Pete was?

He wondered if his new friends had any idea of the identity of the would be murderer. They were very much upset by the incident and refused to talk. His enquiries of the woman brought only vague replies without more than a shaking head. She knew or pretended to know nothing but something about it had frightened her more than he would expect. In fact her anxiety was directed to him for she waited on moving his bed during the night beneath the window where he could not be seen and every night her companion made a round of the cabin before returning. Once the top of his head was visible through the window as he passed.

He had been a roamer, was rapist. The herb application seemed to do something more than heal the wounds, and the plants did the rest. But both wounds would leave scars.

With returning mobility he commenced to consider the situation as it stood. The arm had healed quickly, but the

leg was still too weak to use. Nevertheless, he made preparations for getting back to his job.

The moccasons he had taken from the Indian in his hat he had found painfully small and he wondered what he could do about them. They had served a purpose but he knew that for days after days use they were impractical.

He again saw her examining them curiously. She said nothing at the time but several days later he found a new pair of thick soft deerskin on the floor beside the blankets. Thinking they belonged to one of the Indians he had heard coming and going and that they had come there by mistake he pushed them through. On walking, however, there they were again. He picked them up and examined them curiously. They were beautifully made better than he had ever owned.

"Reuben, I b'gustas got these snatched somewhere," he said to the woman when he saw her next.

"She smiled. "Do they fit?"

"I ain't seed 'em on anybody yet. They always talked in English now. To the half breed it seemed part of their scheme for concealment."

"Try them on yourself," she urged.

He stared at her rubbing an embarrassed hand across his nose. "They'd fit anybody," he told her. "Anybody wot got a chance to wear 'em."

He slipped a boot onto one. It was large leaving room for extra socks and so beautifully soft and flexible. He wriggled his foot comfortably in it. When he looked up she was gone.

"I ain't I ain't done nothin' fer that," he stammered. "I jes' bin suthin' fer wish to look after all these weeks. I has a durned romance I het an I reckon I bin nashin' lots o' times. That's cause I ain' bin laid up so long before, never. Once a woman nursed me!" I married her. Once or twice more they put me in a hospital but I didn't stay long! Feelin' well & I do an' havin' to be here an' do nothin' it don't suit me none. I'd rather be out even in the cold as do what I come fer."

"What did you come for?" she asked.

He had spoken without thinking and he looked away. "C'mon, I can't think o' nothin' but that Injun wot shot me. I got lots to do that an' I'm gran' to do it."

"You didn't come to the mountains to get him," she said, with slow emphasis. "Why did you come?"

"Joe Blue Goose heard me tell 'wy I come."

"Who is this Joe Blue Goose?" she enquired. "Blue Pete has not yet told me who he came." She did not wait for a reply but dropped the blanket into place and was gone.

He wished so much as spoke to her when hidden behind the blankets it was too much like breaking in on the privacy she sought. But when next she came to him he said:

"It do matter more to you now, 'wy I come huntin' it not. Tain't gonna to hurt you none. You do needta know somehow. That's other reasons for comin' — an' mebbe the Mountain's had tell yuh some o' them."

She eyed him keenly and he managed to face it. A slow, sad smile spread over her face. "I'll remember that I don't want to know now."

He felt mean about it and he could not understand why it was nobody's business but North Wind's why he was there.

That night two men entered the cabin after dark and dropped heads on the floor. Almost always the woman spent the day alone but at night a man was always there leaving early in the morning. It did not surprise Blue Pete since there was nothing to do in the foothills but hunt. Always there was fresh meat or venison hung. By the sounds, too, he could follow the process of cutting skins and often frames, with the stretched furs, leaned against his window.

Able now to hobble about he never went near the window when the Indian was working outside. It was no concern of his that they should act as they did, so long as they remained the good friends they were. As friends he must respect their wishes.

The time neared when he felt that he might leave. The splints had been removed, and the bones appeared to have set well. A few days of gentle exercise would be wise before facing the outdoors.

The fact that it was now the dead of winter appalled him none. There were always satisfactory refuges in the wilds for an outdoor man like himself and he had no fear of the snow or the cold. He hoped, too, that he might still be able to make use of the Indian encampments of other tribes than Mountain Stream's though he knew that was problematical if deprived of Mountain Stream's feelings toward him. He had really done nothing to incur the chief's enmity.

except to wish to be free. He forgot the shot he had fired over the heads of the Indians as they set out after him, it had no evil intent, and should not count. If they knew how he had again saved Mountain Stream a life they would welcome him still as a friend.

At any rate, he had a job to do, and to do it he was prepared to face every risk.

One thing troubled him—he had no idea what had happened to Joe Blue Goose, or where he was, and in the Blackfoot was his one hope of success within any reasonable time. Every time he wondered if Joe had had anything to do with his rescue he remembered that the woman appeared to know nothing about him. Even if she were trying to deceive him he did not feel that it would be sporting to pick up the Blackfoot's trail from the cabin where he had helped to bring him.

Bluntly he tackled the subject:

"Will yeh tell Joe Blue Goose missy, I wanna see him?"

As usual she frowned, and shook her head. "Who is Joe Blue Goose? You have never told me. Was he with you? Is he a friend?"

"I shure hope he's a friend," he muttered. But he gave it up, though he was not quite convinced.

"Day after t morrow I'm packin' mukh freight," he announced.

She appeared not to understand, and he explained. "I gotta git gone" I mean."

"But it's winter," she protested. "You do not know what winter is here in the mountains. You wud lose yourself and freeze to death."

"I gotta git movin', missy. Yah didn't think I was campin' on yuh the hull winter, didja?"

"There is room" she said. "But you gotta go—to do what you came for." She sighed.

"Never was so long under a roof at one time in mukh life," he grunted, ignoring the implied question. "Rather sleep outdoors any weather, a most. I'm useta it. Winters I ain't slept inside a dozen times. That's lots o' snow here to crawl into. I know how to use it to keep warm. I won't freeze."

"And you have your job to do," she repeated pointedly.

"Shure! I gotta find that Netche—Injun, I mean, the one wot shot me." The contemptuous term for her race had slipped from him.

She sighed, and left him. But in a few minutes she was back. "You please talk not like that to anyone else. They know you not Indian then. Next time we perhaps not find you in time."

He puzzled about her—how she knew so much about him. Was it that he had talked where unconscious or had Joe Blue Goose told her? The temptation was strong to wait around until the Blackfoot left a trail from the cabin for him to follow.

CHAPTER XXVI

ON THE JOB AGAIN

WHEN the time came to leave the cabin, seven weeks of inaction and soft living—soft compared with the strenuous life he had always lived and preferred—had made him a little doubtful of the future. Eager as he was to get into the open life and to get on with his job, the absence of a definite line of action affected him strongly, and made him uneasy. There was too the winter the squaw had spoken of. He even found himself doubting the completeness of his recovery, the strength of the injured arm and leg.

A sense of obligation of a debt he could think of no way of paying added to his discomfort. It brought more persistently to his mind the mystery of the Indians who had done so much for him. That they should not wish him to be able to describe them, perhaps unconsciously to those who sought to do them harm was reasonable enough. In his own mind he decided never to speak of them.

A few days before he left he knew by the sounds beyond the blankets that something disturbing had happened. It was early in the morning, and he was not yet quite awake. Drowsy and too comfortable to waken to a cold world he heard the outer door open, and a moment later a grunt of surprise and anger. The Indian woman hurried to the door, and she too, exclaimed. Something of unusual concern to them had occurred.

Blue Pete was wide awake now. By certain sounds he knew that someone was floundering through the snow, making a circuit of the cabin, and without snowshoes, puffing with the effort, and muttering curses.

The door opened and an excited, whispered conversation took place.

The blankets parted and the woman came through. With-out a word she picked up the half-breed's snowshoes, scolded him again, and started to go.

"He needed I know that skunk's fur here an' snatched him snowshoes. He deserved. But I gotta have that poor mink-skin. I'm given over any day. Now I'll get out Indian Lemme get that skunk. I can track him down an' I'm sure
distrust you folks back for a lot o' things he done. I'll pick up mother your snowshoes an' bring em back for you. Honest I will."

What had happened was evident. The snowshoes always left in the set outside the cabin that the mink was and never caught or cut the gut and carry the frame had been stolen. Where snowshoes were an absolute necessity, it was a disaster to come. They were as invaluable as a cache of food for a hunter or a tent for a distant tramp. In the law of the open spaces such a crime was punishable by death.

To Blue Pete it seemed not such a hardship such a trapping set of traps. With his own snowshoes he would take up the trail of the robber or the another pair from one of the camps. The ethics of helping himself where there were traps after just might not stand especially when the owners were Indians. Indians would not harm if he ever thought of taking a pair from an isolated cabin such as this.

The woman did not put the snowshoes back. There is a that she said. He'd take it.

"Yeah an catch up to him with a bullet in his heart. I know them skunks. Lemme do it. I've had a lot to do with em before an this one's the job. He got me upset he'll never get the chance again. He knows wherein I trail him so he'll be watchin with some more o' the bullets that got me. I like that sorta thing. He won't be expectin me so I got a better chance."

She shook her head stubbornly. "We don't keep you here to let you get shot again. You gotta be careful a lot yet. There'll be new snowshoes in a couple days. We got the gut and the frames. It just happened his spare pair was out there too because he had broke through the ice and wet his best pair."

"Then wait till the new ones are made," urged the half-

breed. "It ain't safe jes' yet." He saw the danger more clearly than they did. Besides, he knew who the culprit was and that was a job for himself alone.

Nothing he could say changed their decision. The snowshoes were taken, and he heard the swift "crunch" of her companion setting out after the thief.

A few hours later part of his fears were justified. The outer door opened and someone staggered in, breathing heavily and uttering a groan. The clatter of the snowshoes on the floor showed that the wearer had not even stopped to remove them outside.

"Is he bad missy?" Blue Pete called out.

She was too busy to reply. But later she came to him.

"It is not serious," she said. But her face was deeply lined, and her eyes were troubled as she leaned weakly against the wall.

"The bullet was aimed at his heart, but it struck a button. It has torn the flesh, that is all."

She stumbled back through the blankets. Later she returned with the snowshoes.

"Here they are," she said. "But I will give them to you only when you promise not to go out after him—not now."

Blue Pete's teeth bared. "It's another count ag'in him. Pust thing I know I'll be fergittin' wot I come fer."

Her head raised sharply. "What was that?"

He had never before been so tempted to tell her, and his lips had parted to speak before he regained control of himself. He shook his head.

"Yah ain't untrusted, missy. I can't tell on myself," he added, suggesting some lawlessness that had better be forgotten.

She sighed, and left him. But in a moment she was back. "You didn't promise."

He grinned. "I won't go fer a day or two, I promise. I'll need a good arm an' a good leg fer wot I gotta do—to that skunk."

When the time of his departure arrived he was dumb. He had no word of thanks. His idea of gratitude was of something that demanded action, not words. To put how he felt into words would have embarrassed him painfully. One did things for others not to be thanked, but from a natural

impulse or desire, words of thanks only made gratitude artificial or mercenary. But the sense of obligation to the woman was keen.

Disliking the Indians as he did, the care she had taken of him accused him. Only of late had he thought to distinguish between individuals. Now he knew he should be fair and isolate his hatred. If only he could have conveyed something of that to the squaw as she stood in silence watching him work his heels into the thongs! On his feet were the cozy moccasins she had made for him. Behind him he was leaving a cabin where he had been comfortable for the longest stay in his life under cover. But he could not speak. All he could do was to hope that some day he might be given the opportunity of doing something for them. Until then he would never speak of them to others.

He stumbled with the thongs, and at last he found his tongue.

"I'll share come bark some day, mosey. I won't forget."

He waved to her and was off hurrying to hide himself and his feelings in the forest. He was strangely unhappy about it all. Her lonely life, the isolation of it, the danger that surrounded her and her companion were personal mystery to him.

He did not slacken his pace until he was well out of sight and lost in the snowclad forest. Yet he seemed to feel her eyes on him still standing where he had left her, pretty, lonely, kindly.

Suddenly his eyes fixed on a snowshoe track before him and he saw that unconsciously he had followed the trail made by the squaw's companion. He turned abruptly away from it, lest he should be tempted stumbling blindly along, his shoulders catching in snow-covered boughs and low brush.

It was a dull day, and after a time the mountains at his back seemed to press down on him, weighing on his spirits, almost frightening him. He remembered miserably that he had nowhere to go. There was no danger of losing himself; he had lived too long in the wilds for that to happen. But where should he go?

He felt lonesome without a friend in the world into which he was once more entering. He had his job but it had still no starting point, and threatened to have no end. All the weeks of his inactivity had failed to produce a plan beyond

the one he had had from the time he saw Joe Blue Goose with Mountain Stream a follower. During his drowsiness he had thought only of getting out.

Brushing the snow from a fallen tree he seated himself to think things over. But nothing presented itself that was promising beyond what he had had in mind. Joe Blue Goose, always Joe Blue Goose and nothing else. But so far everything had massed to defeat him there.

With a sharp breath he rose. He would not be defeated, he would find the Blackfoot.

It meant that he must sit at the Indian encampments until he found where Joe made his headquarters. Once he found him he would never lose sight of him.

Given any sort of chance tracking was easy for him. But hitherto the trail had always led to an enemy. Now it must lead to a friend and that was different. It required a different approach, a different technique. He was not certain that he was fitted for that.

The greatest obstacle was the uncertainty of his standing with the Indians. Mountain Stream while not exactly an enemy would certainly not be friendly to one who had walked out on him in the night. And that feeling was likely to spread to the other camps. At the best it meant trouble and delay.

The place to start to find the Blackfoot was obviously Mountain Stream's encampment. As a friend of the chief's the Blackfoot was sure to be there sooner or later. Some sort of understanding between them seemed to ensure that. To start there too would quickly show where he stood with the Indians, and that he should know as soon as possible.

That night he spent none too uncomfortably under the bank of snow that had massed on the dearfall in the timber line. Many a night he had spent like that and he knew what should be done. He and Inspector Barker had exchanged reminiscences of such winter nights for the Inspector had been through it all in his earlier years. Once he had snowshoed for two months on the trail of an Indian woman who had killed her purpose. Every night he had been forced to sleep in the snow. Such experiences had given him the rugged constitution he now possessed.

In the open it was close to zero but the heat of the half-breed's breath and body actually melted the snow in places,

and brought down of chilling water on him from the matted branches overhead.

He had timed his arrival at the campsite for the early morning. He wished to be there when the trappers started on their trail, now. At that time he would be sure to see Joe Blue Gown. He was in the camp for every Indian was out to see the trappers leave.

In the early light he struck northward seeking the beaten trail he knew would be there. It was the one way to cover his own trail. He found what he sought; the route the trappers followed from the camp. But it was narrow for the Indians went in single file. Their snowshoes were made narrow to get through the trees, while the men he saw were wider, more useful for quicker gait and it seemed that he had to be careful not to leave telltale marks. It troubled him to get a narrow pass when the opportunity offered. There were places on the trail where he was forced to take his snowshoes off to get through the trees. The wider snowshoes would hinder him too if he had to run for it in the thicker parts of the forest.

The camp was already awake and in movement when he came within sight of it. The greatest care was necessary then or the dogs would give him away. To keep the camp in sight and to unseen himself he must find some place close enough to the trail to reach it without leaving a mark in the snow. This much it meant climbing a tree one he could reach from the trail.

Such a hiding place was not difficult to find for close to the camp the trail wound through a thick forest. An overhanging branch offered what he sought as he leaped to it and took himself up. Even then he must be careful, for most of the boughs of the trees about him were covered with snow and fresh snow shaken on the other side would catch the eyes of the Indians and warn them that something was in the tree.

The tree he chose was a thick evergreen unto whose branches the snow seemed to have failed to penetrate and he forced his way up into the thick green and commenced to climb.

CHAPTER XXVII

A MOUNTAIN LION

HE was just in time. A line of Indians moving at a jog-trot along the trail from the encampment. They had perfected the horse-lumbered movements that makes mountaineering so fatiguing even to undeveloped muscles and covers an impossible distance in a day.

Blue Pete had his eyes on them studying every figure as it came up sight. Hearing that he might still be seen, he reached up without looking and caught hold of a higher branch to draw himself farther from the trail.

The other was perfect for his purpose. It was not so thick as to prevent him climbing and about it clustered three thick spruce trees that screened him everywhere except straight before his eyes toward the encampment and in one spot over the trail.

The Indians were unlikely to raise their eyes at that particular spot for it would be almost directly over their heads, yet he would be able to see them plainly as they passed beneath.

He sat uncomfortable, uneasy nevertheless, and almost unconsciously he released his feet from the thongs and freed the revolver on a strap in the tree. His rifle slung by a strap from his left shoulder and held steadily in his left hand, was ready for almost instant use yet he could not imagine any situation where he would fire, save it. An uncomfortable feeling as if from some new danger took hold of him and he gripped the rifle more firmly with his left hand leaving his right free for his gun.

All the time the Indians came nearer. At the head of the line was Mountain Stream, ~~and~~ along with a powerful stride. He too appeared uneasy for his eyes kept flitting about and his rifle was held in his right hand across his chest. In the group behind him was no sign of Joe Blue Loon, and Blue Pete frowned with disappointment.

Suddenly his skin shivered to sleep. It was an intensification of the sense of danger on which he had always relied. He tried to blame it on the recent weeks of soft living and inaction and he scolded himself. It angered him.

It could not be that any immediate threat came from the

Indians certainly not of the sort that justified the way he felt. The Indian bank rubber? He did not think so but he did peer about into the nearest trees. However the fellow would not dare do anything in the face of the approaching lion.

To shift his position he reached for a still higher branch and raised his eyes.

What he saw sent such a chill of dread through him as he had never felt before so overpowering that he almost released his hold.

Lying across a branch only a few feet above his head, its clear yellow eyes fixed gleefully on him, the red nose quivering with excitement was a mountain lion, or cougar. The short rounded ears were stiff and threatening, its wide lips protruded on either side of the branch to tail with the dark tips waved almost hypnotizingly back and forward. The muscles beneath its sleek tawny coat rippled as the claws of the brute seemed to feel for a stouter base from which to spring.

He had shot cougars before but always as nothing more than an incident in a hunt where he had all the advantage. This was different so vastly and importantly different that he felt for the moment as if he had never seen such a beast before.

And in the first instant he recognized that it was prepared to spring.

He wondered why it waited so long yet vaguely he knew the reason the impertinence, the defiance of anything in the shape of an animal daring to climb boldly toward it unsettled it for the moment. It did not understand. Generations had established its belief in its kingship over every other animal. Man it had learned to fear but only under conditions that did not exist here. Generations had established an undivided hatred of its species man and here was its chance to express that hatred.

All the time Blue Pete had climbed cautiously to make as little noise as possible but always he had climbed closer and closer to the brute as if he did not fear it. So far that had been his salvation.

His mind acted quickly. His rifle was in his left hand, but it did not point and his right hand had not yet reached his 45. "Well as he was on the draw, he knew that to make the slightest move would bring that great tawny body down on him, with slashing claws that would rip him apart with

one stroke one hundred and eighty pounds of visitors have even it be managed to get a shot as it leaped.

He stiffened. He fought the Indians in all the world was nothing but his self and that year of greatest value ever. Never before even when fought had he felt so helpless, so the son of any means of defense. He noted in the very imminence of the danger he kept his eyes fixed on the prairie from side to side, trying to see if the long hair, that the Indian and darkness, was near. He noted that He wondered how long he had to live with such signs of the bush passed. His thoughts of his gun but even a bullet through the bridge a horse at such a close range would not save him.

He stiffened and now with the tree was free of voice or was it that the singer had heard the tree for the spirit messages he had? It stood alone to the left along which was bound to pass twice a day a line of unceasingly unprepared Indians. Hunger, the promise of a big dinner had brought the braves west. The camp for its meal.

His head commenced to burn. He felt slightly dizzy but with fright so much as with the effect of looking upward and trying not to think. The singer's song had then been held now. He then did not shift it was ready to spring. The tail seemed to move more suddenly and surely. The fur quivered more rapidly.

Now is the half breed hanged his own junction. Feeling for a better grip on the branch for his manacled feet. He would then himself release the moment these muscles above him had sensed the the spring. It would not take him entirely. he is man and more worthy enough for that but he is right easier death. His gun was useless. he needed every effort every thought for the leap.

Thoughts of Mira dashed the rag ham of the Mounted Police who would never know what had happened to him, of the job he would fail for the first time to carry through. It brought to his lips a quick breath of anger and disappointment.

A rushing explosion burst close by. it seemed to come from beside his ear. With his own voiceless flushed it was the signal to leap for both the singer and the man. He shot the rag the green the towns hinge hauled itself at last. One job caught him as it passed. It swept down the side of his scalp and tore into his left shoulder.

Even as he fell he lost consciousness.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CONVALESCENT

IT was three days before he regained his senses. With fumbling mind he opened his eyes and stared about. His first thought was that he was back in the isolated cabin he had just left. But a glance showed no excluding blankets. In the opposite wall was a doorway. These were different paints too from any he had seen before.

He raised a hand to his head and found it covered with bandages; a raging ache struck through it, making it difficult to focus his eyes.

Painfully he rolled to his back and tried to raise himself on his left arm as he had been forced to do during those weeks with the strange Indian woman only to find that it was strapped to his body. He groaned and relaxed.

Someone came softly and stood beside him. He stared up at a dark face and blinked. Mountain Stream. It was too mortal to believe, especially as the chief's face was wreathed in a friendly smile.

"You are better. Light in Dark?"

Blue Pete looked down on his bound arm and made a wry face. "I must be better than I thought. I'd ever be lost—now."

Mountain Stream grunted. "It was almost too real for you—too real to think you could come through it and live."

"What happened? I was—I was looking for you."

The chief nodded, and turning gave a soft order to someone out of sight. There were other eyes looking for me—or for one of us. They belonged to that."

An Indian had brought forward a rack on which was stretched a large tawny skin.

"Lookin' Mountain Stream's eyes were quick, and his aim good. That is why Light in Dark is alive now."

It was a gorgeous skin the glow and vividness of life retained in the preparation. A long tail that swelled toward the end to a dark mass, hung to the floor. The chief leaned the frame against the wall where Blue Pete could feast his eyes on it.

"Mountain devil," said the chief, "the largest we ever saw. From there to there, moving his hand from nose to end of tail, "almost nine feet. It would weigh more than one

hundred and eighty pounds same as I do. It was a killer. We have hunted for it for years. It took our dogs, and sometimes even our colts, and twice full-grown ponies. Two of our braves have been struck down, but were saved. A child went last year we never found what happened to him. Light in-Dark brought him to our rifles at last. We are grateful and happy."

Blue Pete was too confused to follow it all but he knew that he was being thanked. For what? For the greatest fight he had ever had for lying there with a crushing pain in his head and a disabled arm. He closed his eyes and tried to remember more. And after a time the picture of the mountain lion on the branch over his head came to him. He reached out and touched the soft skin.

"It will keep Light in Dark warm on many a cold night," said Mountain Stream.

"You are—giving it - to me?" stammered the half-breed.

"It is yours."

"But—but you shot it!"

"I would not have seen it had you not moved just as I came beneath the tree. It would have killed one of us before we could shoot, if it had leaped on us. One blow of those paws is all that is needed. It had acquired a taste for human blood."

Blue Pete continued to shake his head. "I was helpless. I could not have saved myself. You saved my life."

Mountain Stream sighed. "Mountain Stream is glad to be able to pay a debt. You saved me from the grizzly. You saved me when I lay wounded on the mountain side. Only part of the debt is paid."

A snow settled on the half breed's face. "I was careless. It cannot be that I am a great hunter. The hunter you took me to be or I would not have put myself in such a position. I did not see the mountain devil in the tree until it was too late. I hang my head in shame."

The chief shrugged and smiled. "None but Light in Dark would have leaped so quickly. None but Light in-Dark would have lived through it. The mountain devil's claws struck him, and turned him over so that he landed on his shoulder and his head struck another tree. It would have killed anyone else."

The whole set in the tree, up to the time the cougar leaped, was before him now. He shuddered. "When did it happen?"

Three sons ago. You will be all right in a week—perhaps two or three. We know how to treat wounds with our own leaves. The arm is not so bad; it is the head. You will carry the mark all your life."

They had conversed in ipecac, of course—the only language Mountain Stream understood—but now Blue Pete slept in his own thoughts, muttered in English.

One minute Mira! think I am more a prize beauty than ever now. I add to many marks I look like a target.

Mountain Stream did not understand. Light in Dark is out of danger. We are a set.

With the others, I has sought complete Blue Pete had other things to consider. He had come with the feeling that the Indians would not seek one him, though they might not be entirely hostile to him. Now they appeared more friendly than ever. Is their chief you? I set the pose. It seemed to him that he should explain his sudden departure all those weeks ago.

"I had to go away," he said.

The chief's men must have been following the same channel. We did not know the reason. When Flying Cloud appeared in my thoughts at first that perhaps he had killed you, for you had disappeared. He

"Flying Cloud! Who is he?"

The morning after you disappeared Flying Cloud stole into one of the abns and took things. He was seen. He is the Indian who has tried to kill me and you. Perhaps he was here seeking my life. Then some of my men saw you, and took after you. They intended to do you no harm but you shot at them."

Blue Pete remembered. "No, I did not shoot at them. All I wanted was to get away. I can never stay long in any place, and I felt I had to move on. You were making me stay."

I thought never to see Light in Dark again said the chief. He has been away so long. Where was he?"

I was everywhere. He would never speak of the past who had been so good to him.

A hurt expression appeared in Mountain Stream's face. "I have asked the way everywhere. You were not there. No one in any of the camps had seen you. He leaned against the wall beside the bar frame and has been ever bored into the half-breeds. Why did you come to us in the first place? Why are you here in the foothills?"

There was one explanation that always fitted such a

quots. There are many reasons why an Indian would like the white people. There are many reasons why he wishes to hate among friends of his own race. There are reasons of might be longer ago for his friends to know who with a man should sleep & hunt. The white man's laws are not over laws but they are all powerful.

It seemed as if you Mountain Stream spread her banks, and turned her back right or left in coils with lymphatic love. There are no curtains to be added.

Wish him he straightened away from the wall and a brown horse his forehead. I was once in Red River. You came to us at a time. I remember.

The Indians knew almost every detail of the attempted bank robbery, for it had caused publicity at the inexplicable way of the Indian Telegraph. Then their hung his head.

I said there of the Indians who drove the bank. But there were not Indians but bad breeds. They had made themselves up as Indians just for the robbery. One enough. He was the one Indian.

He agreed there he must be a certain character would pass on him if he tried the hard that the Indians when had escaped was lying blood and he might attract himself for the Indians had been made up in the eyes of the Mounted Police. It was a bad war for a judge. There must be no place better suited than that. It would be better as it being blood to judge the performance of the Indians in the different circumstances. Like he might have if there knew he had money from a white man's home.

He said he drives from the outfit now for he will follow the Mountain Police but not until they get home. he said.

Mountain Police would thoughtfully. The Mounted Police sometimes there are not friends but the Indians are no longer what they were and the Mounted Police are partly to blame. I am a hard but what power have I. Only what the Mounted Police permit. There are both of us all. I am told that only a week a month I could the setting sun walk along on where there are no Mounted Police but that is beyond the mountians mountains and it is not my land. The Indians there would not let me to break so on their trap-lines.

The reference was to British Columbia, where the Mounted Police had no jurisdiction—and British Columbia says the worse for it.

"The Mounted Police," said Blue Pete, "have saved many a scalp of ours, even when they prevented us getting some of our own. The day of the buffalo is gone, and the law is here, the white man's law . . . We have to admit that it is fair to all though sometimes we have to flee from it."

"Yes, you flee," smiled Mountain Stream.

"There are laws we, as Indians, must obey—but we do not like them."

"That is why Light-in-Dark is here?"

With a friend Blue Pete was not a good bar. He was saved by the abrupt opening of the outer door. Someone came across the skin covered floor and stood beside the pile of skins on which he lay.

It was Joe Blue Goose.

CHAPTER XXIX

MORE ENQUIRIES

THIS sight of the Blackfoot brought to the half breed's mind the Indian encampment in the cutbanks near Medicine Hat, and a wave of nostalgia swept over him. He wanted to get back—to his cattle, to Mira, to Sergeant Mahon and Inspector Barker, to the open prairie, where the only break the Cypress Hills, was like home to him. Suddenly he hated the job that had brought him to the mountains, with their cold silent immensity. The longing set up a nervous condition that worked to delay the benefit of the measures the Indians had taken to make him well. He realized that later

Joe Blue Goose's eyes bored into him, asking questions, suspicious, almost unceasingly. Tall, lithe, and straight, his dark face was still and slightly grim.

"You have come back, Light-in-Dark," he said, in his own tongue, and at the end a slight lifting of the voice asked why.

Blue Pete jerked a thumb toward Mountain Stream. "They brought me back—like this."

"Yes, I have heard. You are lucky. It is the largest panther they have ever seen a man-killer. They have hunted it for years, their children have feared to enter the forest. But you were always lucky. Take care lest it may not last."

It was a warning Blue Pete could not fail to understand, but he ignored it. I was careless. Perhaps I might have shot the panther but it would have gone worse with me."

The Blackfoot's eyes seemed to harden. What were you doing in that tree?"

It was a question the half-breed could not answer honestly with safety particularly to the man most intimately concerned. He evaded it.

"I have been long away and it is not well to live too long alone. I do not like the mountains. I do not like the winter here; it is not what I am used to. I remembered the comfortable hut they gave me here and I wanted to return."

"Why did you leave it?"

Blue Pete made a grimace. "I am a wanderer, I can never stay long anywhere. All my life I have moved from place to place. My friends here thought I would stay with them all winter and I could not face so long a time in one spot. That is why I left. I went by night because I did not wish to hurt their feelings."

Joe Blue Goose continued to stare into his eyes, and for a time he said nothing more. Suddenly he spoke. "There was another Indian here the night you left. Flying Cloud is no man's friend here. He has tried to shoot Mountain Stream, and—"

"He has tried to shoot me too," Blue Pete broke in.

"When was that?"

The half-breed had been thinking of the shot through the cabin window when he lay helpless, but he dare not speak of that. That first shot fired at them as they rode northward toward the home camp they still thought to have been aimed at Mountain Stream.

"The day I climbed to save Mountain Stream," he replied in English. "You remember?"

The Blackfoot's brow was furrowed with doubt. "You are not his friend? You have had nothing to do with him?" He spoke still in Blackfoot.

"I will some day," promised Blue Pete, gritting his teeth. "Flyin' Cloud's gotta settle th me for lots things."

"Is it that—that you ran from him—here?"

The half-breed scowled angrily. "Yah astus ef I'm afraid o' him?"

The Blackfoot glanced about, and leaned nearer. "They will think your story about him is not true—perhaps. Flyin'

Cloud is a rogue, they have come to kill him. He shot at their chief."

"Are you sure it was him he wanted?"

"Who else?"

Blue Pete was not prepared to tell what he knew. "Some day I'll kill Flynn Cloud himself," he said with a finality that could not be questioned.

The Huckleback appeared convinced. "I ask because they will not ask you. They will ask me. They have accepted you as a friend and it closes their lips. But there are things you might tell them that would make them sure of you."

It was a temptation. To tell everything might leave him free to get about but almost certainly it would make them cold to him. But this persistent, questioning irritated him. He fought back the temptation in time.

"Flynn wanted," he repeated. "I never lay eyes on the like. I promise you that an Mountain Stream. And that's all." "Then I'm well." The sagging memory of the job he had first to do closed his lips for a moment. "I'll get him some day," he ended weakly.

The eyes of the Huckleback continued to bore into him. "None can." "I've have something else to do first. Is that it?" "I've have not come to the mountains to hunt."

"I've come to the mountains to hunt," replied the half-breed, and he was able to say it with conviction, for it was the truth.

Joe Blue Custer failed to catch the double meaning. "I am arrested," he said. "But Mountain Stream and his men must be arrested too. I will tell them what you have told me. They may believe. There was doubt in his tone."

Blue Pete saw how serious it might be and he raised himself and leaned against the wall. In the open doorway Mountain Stream's athletic figure stood out clear against the sky. Cold as it was the heat from the stove burned heavily in the corner sent a pleasant soft-silken warmth through the room. Out beyond the door a group of interested Indians clustered. They seemed to be waiting for something.

"Tell Mountain Stream that he said Flynn Cloud a as much has enemy as man. Flynn Cloud a tried to kill him often as he knows. That's why they found him here the other day. I vanquished. I left him knocked out at my feet, for I pushed him good right out their fort this very cabin,

was he was getting ready to shoot Mountain Stream ag'in. I didn't know who he was. It was dark an' all I thought of was his gun and me - cause I needed me to get away.

Joe Blue Eyes's eyes glistened with excitement. He was there right in the camp.

Right out that window at the very door I let him have it then I carried him to my hut. Mountain Stream was right asleep. I had bear him up. He didn't wake up. All I wanted was the sheath the shank carried. I had to take it from him or raid a hut somewhere. I didn't want to steal from friends. I didn't guess nothing till I was well away. That was when I come back an' then seed me. I was after Paha Cloud when they send me. That's all.

The Blackfoot stood as steady as Mountain Stream, and told him the story. The half-breed listened to the end with stolid face one hand at his heart, the other hanging by his side. When the story was told he leaned over the half-breed, his hand extended.

"It is another tribe we see Light-on-Dark," he said gravely.

"He is more than a friend now. He is a brother. Whatever happens we will hunt together we will never be separated."

The suggestion of a smile crossed the face of the Blackfoot as he listened.

"Blue Peter will not fit. We are friends yet," he replied slowly, "but but we cannot hunt together for I cannot stay."

A brown faced Mountain Stream a brother but he said sadly. "It is as a brother sisters." But if he does not wish to remain . . .

"He is a wanderer the Blackfoot broke an' like myself. He will be going away, perhaps from the foothills. He watched the half-breed's face as he spoke."

It was Mountain Stream who broke the silence that followed.

"In the winter we cannot wander it is not safe. If he will stay we will set off together after the Flying C herd. We will never rest till we get him for we cannot be safe till he is killed. I and my people would hunt in peace but that is not possible with Flying C and us."

Blue Peter looked away he could not face them. A soundless chuckle shook the Blackfoot's body. The half-breed gulped with embarrassment.

"Mountain Stream the great chief and leader," he said, "is my friend as he says. That is why I do not fear to ask a favour just one a favour it is easy for him to grant."

"What would Light-on-Dark wish?" asked the chief.

"That he leaves Flynn (led to me I would beat him alone. It was I he shot at first. It is I he wishes to kill most, for he hates me as he never can hate Mountain Stream. I killed his friends. Twice he shot at me before he had reason to hate Mountain Stream therefore he is mine to punish. If I fail, then Mountain Stream may try. He may shoot faster and straighter."

Is that why Light-on-Dark does not wish to warter with us?"

Joe Blue Goose's listening smile was fixed on him, awaiting his reply.

"It is—our reason," declared the half breed.

"There are others." With us Light-on-Dark is safe. The Mounted Police will not get him here; they have not been here for two years. If they came we could hide him. We always know when they are near."

There is another reason. Blue Pete admitted.

Mountain Stream nodded waiting.

"There is another 'yes,'" said Joe Blue Goose softly on his own tongue.

The half breed shrugged, but said nothing and the other two turned away. Neither was satisfied and Blue Pete knew it. Indeed, he had only confirmed the Blackfoot's suspicion and it worried him, so that he became silent and almost sulken. It delayed his recovery.

So closely was he kept to the hut that he fancied that once more he was little better than a prisoner and finally he could bear it no longer. Joe Blue Goose had never come near him again and he knew that from now on the Blackfoot would deliberately keep out of his way.

He was surprised, therefore, when his Blackfoot friend suddenly appeared again. Someone came to the door of the cabin. Fright made Blue Pete could hear him removing his feet from the snowshoe thongs and stamping to free his moccasins from ice and snow. There had been no storm for several days and paths were worn all through the camp. By the very fact that his visitor had come on snowshoes he knew he had come a long way. He was alone at the time, and he trembled with excitement.

The door pushed open, and Joe Blue Goose entered. The half-breed was on his feet, his eyes fixed on the door when it opened. Through the opening he could see the snowshoes stuck in the snow, and a vague thought made his eyes drop.

Joe Blue Goose noticed it, and misread it. He smiled. "The mountain devil paid too much for so little," he said. "You will be well in a week or two."

"I churn well gotta be'" growled Blue Pete in English.

"Must it be in English?" asked the Blackfoot. "You wish to speak that they cannot understand?" He, too, spoke in English.

"No oh, no! I jes' wanna 'member how to talk w'en I git back home."

"You are going soon?"

Blue Pete saw that he would have to be more careful. "I ain't in no hurry. I'm goin' back in the spring, o' course."

"You said you gotta get well quick, but you do not say why."

Blue Pete scowled. "Le's not git goin' over all that ag'in, Joe. Do' matter to nobody here. Yah're allus astun' w'y I'm here. I ain't ast you w'y — not yet."

"I come see you," replied the Blackfoot, with exaggerated innocence.

"Yah're in the foothills same s me. It do' matter to me none w'y I wanna do a bit o' huntin'. You n' me, we cud hunt together. I'm near fit fer it right now. Whar'd I find yuh w'en I'm out?"

Joe Blue Goose dropped his eyes to his moccasins as he stamped to free them from a speck of snow. "I wander—same s you. I ain't got any place to stay. I walk everywhere —here, there."

Blue Pete did not follow it up, but he saw that this was intended to be a farewell, from now on, if the Blackfoot could manage it, their paths would never cross.

"I go now," said the Indian.

Blue Pete went with him to the door, opened it, and passed through first. He drew the Indian's snowboots from the snow and looked them over nodding with approval.

"Most good s mane, wot I took from Flyin' Cloud," he commented.

As Joe Blue Goose swung across the open space toward the forest, Blue Pete smiled.

"Can't git 'way from me now, Joe," he muttered, and went inside.

CHAPTER XXX

A NARROW ESCAPE.

A WEEK later despair in his impatience, he removed the bandages himself. Mountain Stream entered in the midst of it and frowned.

"Light in Dark would leave us?" he asked. "We are sorry."

"It is pleasant to be with friends. Blue Pete returned, "but my home is far away. I have been away from it too long, I would return."

"But not tell? You said there are reasons for being here. Your lips are sealed I would not ask. The lips of a brother may remain sealed if he wishes it so. But in protest he turned stiffly about and left the cabin.

That day Blue Pete bade the Indians good-bye. They gathered to see him go silent, puzzled slightly morose in their failure to understand.

Mountain Stream stalked up to him and placed a hand on either shoulder. "Whatever you do we will always be friends. When you have done at the cabin door is open for you. We will take good care of Light in-Dark a pony as it were our own."

I will be back Blue Pete promised. He knew he would be there was still Flying Cloud to settle with. But he felt mean and ungrateful. It was not that he had told them nothing, not even that he still passed as an Indian but that he had so misjudged them as a race linking them all with the Indian rangers he had known.

Swinging over the snow in the bright sunlight, he felt more himself and for a time he raced along drawing in long draughts of tingling air now and then whistling unusefully. After a time the exaltation passed and he stopped to think things over.

He remembered then that he had no destination in mind, not even a direction. All he could do was wander about—hoping, trusting to luck. He had his health back his keen eyes and ears his strength and his guns and they had always been sufficient. But never before had he been at such a loose end. Things had gone badly with him from the beginning. Injuries he had suffered before but never so many in succession, never so delaying and unopportunity.

He drew his gun from his belt and looked at over broadly. But the gun had not served him well when it was most needed. That was a matter of course, and he was unaccustomed to never being at a disadvantage. He rather than his companion knew more about guns and firearms. He speeded and returned. That gun that faced him was a revolver. He grasped his bandaged hand reflexly to understand.

He replaced the gun and turned thoughts again to broad trees about which the body of his companion passed without touching it or feet. A groan flew suddenly from a maniacal mind. His right hand clutched to his belt and the pistol rang out. The bullet it spewed shattered one of twigs in the grove and hit starting the tree.

A single jagged red-hot fire. He had fled from the log, yet he had known from such where the bullet would go. To prove it he yanked the belt up. The bullet had passed through its neck with a jagged gash he sawed the bandaged claws through the skin of his shoulder and the belt as.

For a long time he walked without any hope, save that so that when at last he became afraid to think it would be found that he had some means hidden and stored. Somewhere back in his mind must have been the thought that his true hope of safety lay in his power to win the other circumstances. The two others must always be one of another of them. It never had. He was the most useful there sometimes.

He sought a gun on the way he had started. He could not be far from the next one apartment now, and he had started with Mountain Stream in their tree northeast. Minutes between a tree and a road ensure him a wide one of safety, and he contented himself with those ever.

However, it was not so far to run the Mountain's trail and when he found it he could never stop until he knew if it brought him back to Mount. The mountain would not be likely to live in a regular camp; he had seen to that sufficiently before the Mountain Police were apt to drop in unannounced at any time.

As he went along he shot three more groves though each after failing managed to escape somewhere under the name Augustus to his failure to find it he was not longer than it was worth.

He entered the occupied house with three hot groves as his contribution to the food that would be provided him.

It was sunburn as he strolled through the huts. It was he recalled now a little past but with the same quiet everywhere its ugliness and truth were concealed. Even Mountain Stream had not remained longer than was necessary to give point to his friendliness. Now the snow was hard and the huts were silent and tightened against the cold and every door was closed, sealing the interior within.

It was the dogs that saw him first and a frenzied barking broke out. It attracted his notice and the cabin doors opened to let the Indians come peering out. They eyed him curiously as he passed waiting to be satisfied as to whether he was friend or foe.

Their welcome, him at last, and in their welcome he read that his return, while to Mountain Stream served him well.

One of the men disappeared at a run and in a few moments the chief appeared trudging stiffly through the snow, a hastily dressed Indian, shirtless, over his shoulders. The others were seated at their own fires. He, raised his hands on the half-breed's shoulders and grunted; then he turned toward until the tip of his head almost reached Blue Pete's face. The colour of unshaved hair made the half-breed's lips close tightly.

"Light in dark is welcome as the full moon recedes the cloud in tree as the flowers of spring as the season of plentiful fur."

"A h-pants, next comes the half year," muttered the half-breed in English. He was embarrassed not so much by the formality of the welcome as by the constraint he was forced to put on himself to keep from spitting in his disgrace. He longed to take the fellow to the corner and shove him into the snow the nearest to a bath he had had in months. He managed however to grunt his thanks.

"The mountain devil he helped to kill said the chief "has taken many of my robes and my dogs. We too have hunted him long."

"Iuh mukku mukku" Blue Pete commenced in English. He went on in Cree. "I did not help to kill it. Mountain Stream shot straight and true when I was helpless. But he had to work off some of his feelings. Iuh mukku."

"If I done was jump the much life an I help make it fast "gull them. An when he done kiss me up in yuh stink wood er I'll spit in yer eye. But yuh we up did my appetite poor of yuh got anything I has eat." He smiled as he spoke in

English so that the Indian thought he was thanking them in some unknown art language.

The chief turned and thanked. "Follow me Light-as-Dark. You were once a great hunter. There is good hunting here the best in the foothills better than where Mountain Stream runs his trap-lines. All winter there is fur in our traps, they are never empty. Light-as-Dark would do well to stay with us."

It looked like another trap and the half-breed shrank from the thought of remaining in such a camp. He dare not show how he felt however for he had questions to ask. Close-mouthed and secretive always the Indian has never recovered from the days of tribal warfare and Blue Pete was not of their tribe.

A hut was set aside for him and a squaw sent to look after him. But the contrast with his white wife was almost too much for him and he sat with his back to her when she was in the hut. As soon as he dared he dismissed her. A few minutes later the herd from friendly north appeared and invited him to hunt with them.

It seemed at first to be exactly what he would have asked for but the chief's stiff silence as they ate warned him that it could be drawn from him and it would not be wise to try. With a sigh he saw himself thrown back on his own resources once more.

During the night he awoke suddenly. His unusual was it that he took it for a warning. Something was happening outside the hut something that concerned him. He lay listening but for a long time not a sound but the soft whisper of wind high in the trees reached him. He then heard by the sharp crack of a frost-bitten branch. He jumped up.

He walked from a room and this time he knew he felt that someone was moving about near the cabin. Yet he heard nothing. Rising he grasped his gun and softly opened the door.

What he saw was the herd tramping through his vines. It looked as if the whole camp was not there and only a few yards away two bears stood as if on guard.

Somehow he closed the door and took his stand inside, gun in hand! Yet he did not feel that he was in any great danger and after a time he lay down again. It might be some Indians but he did not understand. Yet he did not sleep all the time he lay with his eyes glued to the door.

Still nothing happened and at last he fell asleep.

The next time he watershed he knew that someone was at his door. Kneeling himself against the wall gun ready he waited. None but an enemy he decided would have so silently so stealthily. He would shoot the moment the door opened and offered a target.

The door did not open and after a time he knew that he was alone again. To sleep, to be careful he dropped back and closed his eyes.

He had not thought that he slept again that there had been time for it when the mountain day - covering the window space was pushed suddenly in and a handful of blazing evergreen was cast through. It dropped to the rough covered floor and almost before he could rise, aside the whole interior seemed to be in flames a towering infernal-like fire.

He sprang to the door. It was fastened on the outside! Either he would be burned or smothered to death.

The terrible events of the night flashed across his mind. Something had happened in the night to alter the feeling of the camp toward him. The apprehension he had heard and seen had convinced him more than he suspected, though no immediate danger threatened at the moment. That was to come later with the bursting brush. Worse news had surely reached the camp after he had gone to sleep some accusation some revelation of his identity and purpose.

All these thoughts flashed through his mind as he stood clutching before the door. He did not call out. It would be useless, and he did not wish to run into a circle of guns. If he made no noise the Indians would remain indoors, convinced that he could not escape and prepared to meet that he himself must have set the fire should the Mounted Police hear of it.

But where could help come?

He knew the door was too stout for him to break down in time and he dropped to the floor where the burns and smoke were less dense and held his mouth half over his mouth. He had buried the evergreen from the corner where he lay but the wheezy when up, caused now to be acrid. It was the most threatening situation he had ever faced.

He could do nothing but attack the door and he jumped to his feet and started for it.

At that instant something slid along the wall outside, and the door opened. He leaped through. Someone was

running away. By the light of the fire and against the smoke he could not mistake that white figure it was the square he had witnessed—*now and then*. He shrank.

Turning back on the spot he grabbed his pack and thrust his hand at the thoughts of his ancestors and started across the center of the last cabin. He stopped and turned back again, a burning heart and hands not withdrawed but he dashed at the roof of the nearest cabin to smother it with snow, threw the burning embers through the window without a glimmering of fire.

He fell running far enough behind him. The camp was not burning but there reigned his with a temperature abounding from the cabin he had saved. He knew moreover that the danger in those attacks toward him last little so he with the attempt on his life. Whatever was responsible for that danger he tried to burn him to death. That could only be Flying Cloud.

He knew the Indians would pick up his trail as soon as the fire left them free. But there was a lot of time and he stood among the trees and observed. He was not certain that the Indians would take hold of the trail by way of either cabin, and the Indians might be able to smother them in the snow.

The four animals with the walking flames and the smoldering embers from their noses disappeared and vanished rapidly. Two of them did this and dashed toward him but kept their distance. In a score of feet he saw the gun and the sharp edge announced that the Indians had gone.

It was the idea that he might meet Indians closer within the Indian camp. From every hut came a stream of startled but cautious Indians and these so tightly packed possibly than the herd appeared running from the fire and clinging to the earth. The Indians had all run off leaving a pile.

Now Pow walked on and with growing anger. Unslinging his rifle he went about to hunt the herd down. What the Indians dropped into the snow and remained the dead ones lying at last and lying behind the nearest hut.

Again the half breed said that time at the nearest dug it trapped without a wapiti.

The Indians hurried about the burning shore keeping as much under cover as possible. The fire threatened to spread, and half a dozen of the Indians dropped themselves and started by different routes toward him. The rest attacked the flames, keeping snow on them with their eyebrows.

and with boards brought from the huts. The fire had gained no real hold on the logs, and it was quickly put out.

Blue Pete did not hurry. Almost he hoped the Indians would crowd him, giving him an excuse to shoot them. The old hatred of the race rose within him and for the moment he forgot everything they had so recently done for him. He had been so long now beyond the reach of the law that the old rustling lawlessness was on him. He longed for a real fight, to show what his 45 could do.

CHAPTER XXXI

FLIGHT

HE thought better of it before many minutes had passed, and to make certain that he was not followed too closely he turned and rounded back. His tracks would be plain in the snow the Indians would have no difficulty picking them up.

But none were in sight and, curious, he returned to his former position, where he could look in on the encampment. The Indians had started after him, but had lost heart and courage—old had returned. They had no stomach for facing a rifle that had every reason for being turned on them. From the trail they had left the half-breed saw that they had gone only a few yards into the trees. His opinion of the whole tribe dropped still farther.

The excitement had not yet died down. It continued until daylight, the men neglecting their trap-lines. A group was gathered before the chief's hut. Now and then the door opened and someone came out, another taking his place inside. Some sort of conference was taking place, restricted in its numbers by the space within. He wondered what they discussed. Were they going to take up the chase, or was it a scheme to save their own skins if what they had attempted became known?

All day he remained within sight of the camp, and all day there was much excitement. Toward dusk the camp quietened down, and the Indians filtered back to their own huts. Finally a pair emerged from the chief's hut. One was the chief himself. The other? With a startled, questioning,

unhappy from Blue Pete recognized Joe Blue Grouse. The pair crossed the open space and disappeared into a hole on the other side of the camp.

Joe Blue Grouse, the one who had changed these feelings toward him, the one who had thrown the burning branch into his hat. He refused to believe it. Yet he had believed that everything would go much the same. And still he fought conviction. Certainly the Muskrat had not been unkind, but he had supposed it to be one who could be trusted. If so Indians ever came or trusted. There was even no evidence

beyond a doubt that he had so much as betrayed the fact that Blue Pete was not what he professed to be. He might not think that such a betrayal might be believed worth the serious evening of the Muskrat intended to betray him. Had Joe Blue Grouse thought over and over all of the purposes the bad Indian's enemies had undertaken what measures he could take to protect his Indian woman.

He had to know the answer. However, he had promised himself to do this task of the Muskrat again until he was satisfied. This intention with North Wind. Accordingly he worked through the forest beneath the cabin under which the two men had disappeared.

It was full dark before he reached a point from which he might see the back of the hut. He had been forced by the dogs to give the gun a wide berth, and at the point the clearing widened far back and he laid out at the right. His trail might be plain enough long before the Indians could do anything he would have accomplished his purpose and be far away. Only one thing mattered now—Joe Blue Grouse.

As he passed the hut he picked his way forward more cautiously. He expected that the dogs would be buried in the snow and silent the camp, each in his own little burrow. There they curled their bodies round about their noses, ears and whiskers, however cold the night. But there sense of smell was so strong that his scent would carry to them on the breeze. He snatched it from the camp up that side, and he advanced more hopefully.

Luck found him. He almost stepped on one of the dogs and it gave vent to the master with a hysterical barking and yelping. It averted the warning from a number of yelping throat-saws.

There was nothing to do but run for it and with a rattled voice Blue Pete turned back into the trees. He had no time

of the dogs. He would have welcomed a chance to allow them all—but the Indians would read the turn of the chimney and seek its origin.

Unarmed again he crept along at night toward the water trail. He would not give up, yet he would wait until daylight and wait where the Indians went. Lying a protected spot in a dense forest he let him manage to live without a without troubling the trees or the soil except the trail and the wind. There he slept.

With the first light he was up. He had not slept well for he was a lone hunter for his tribe. What was the thing he had lost, and was he still within the camp? Taking his stand within sight of the trail he waited. In the early morning a herd of bison came out of the valley below.

Mist Peter sprang from his quiet cover. For Blue Cloud was not among them. Through every side he saw Indians in the camp, prepared to meet the bison according the chief. It might be said it proved that the Indians were left alone. Had a greater number come?

Half a dozen dogs valued themselves great men, but they owned that it was unsafe to take liberties with them. They started about him at a safe distance. Mist Peter imagined them to be fierce and impudent. informed the half dozen a belief of their full. These dogs suddenly made known themselves. The bison were gone. Mist Peter walked on. From a ridge opposite who were enough to be apprised regarding your bison. Coming appeared direction. But he knew nothing more important than what he met.

Walking straight for the herd's trail he crawled on the deer trail he thought again for a moment his last hour drew within. Then he heard the bay of a wolfman who was said and a screeching sound soon afterwards. For a time he listened and a growl spread over his dark face. He passed around the corner of the cabin.

What he saw there brought a burst of laughter from his lips. A spear had thoughts to sweep through the window opening but it was too small for the grub to change half in half not passing at the mouth and grasping with hand and pressure. Head and shoulders had recovered enough but the head had to wait for the end to make off. In the struggle she had her two hands laid on the spear which the hand clutched with both hands while from neither arm the grasp of her hunting legs. Her head turned toward the hall door, and a shout of exulted terror and pain burst from her

His laughter increased unrestrained and noisy, and gradually her fear gave way to anger and anxiety.

He said in *Cree*, "You were not built for that sort of girdle, my girl. I wouldn't think it ever was your size. Now let's see." He walked about her studying her judiciously. "In or out that's the question, or would you prefer to wait until you're hungry enough to slip through?"

"No one is at home," she grunted. "Go away."

The irrelevance of it tickled him, and he laughed again. "Half of you is. If anyone was back in there--it should be your husband."

Hearing him laugh so heartily, some of the squaws had come out of the huts. He beckoned to them.

"Get inside," he ordered, "and see which way she will slide through easiest. I think the biggest part's inside. I can't go in. I'm married."

With a *gukkuk* the squaws obeyed. Others relieved of their fears crowded about him laughing with him. The squaw to the opening commenced to make strange movements, and at last she slipped through into the hut taking several of the other squaws with her to the floor.

Blue Pete went around the corner and entered, blocking the group as they tried to escape. He stood before the door.

"Where is Joe Blue Goose?" he demanded.

These eyes flitted from one to another but they did not answer. He saw that they would not tell if they knew. He turned to the chief's squaw who was still sprawled on the floor, grunting and groaning.

"Is Joe Blue Goose still here?" he asked.

She struggled to resurrect the dignity of her rank. "He is not."

"When was he here last?" It was a test question.

"Yesterday. He left in the night."

"Where did he go, which direction?"

The squaw shook her head.

He was reluctant to believe her, but he knew the Indians well enough to see that he would learn nothing of value. His sleeping place had been close to the trail and he could not believe that anyone could have passed without waking him, for he had not slept well. But perhaps the Blackfoot had gone during the time he was making his way back to the trail after his encounter with the camp dogs. He was not even certain that Joe Blue Goose was still in the hut, into which he had disappeared, when the dogs drove him away.

"I will look," he growled. "Stay here, all of you, till I am finished."

He knew he would find nothing, but he wished to make a nuisance of himself in the camp that had treated him so badly. He had reached the seventh hut when a stir among the sullenly watching squaws made him turn and look in the direction they were staring.

Through the trees came a lone figure on snowshoes. Just a glance, then the half-breed was off, gliding swiftly out of sight around the nearest hut. Into the forest he raced at top speed.

On the side of the fur cap of the approaching stranger he had recognized the badge of the Mounted Police!

CHAPTER XXXII

ON THE TRAIL

HE ran as he had seldom run before, as he had never run even after a breach of the law. Upset and surprised, he was in a panic. He panted with excitement before even reaching the cover of the trees, though ordinarily he could run for hours without changing the tempo of his breathing. His head buzzed with the shock of it. From a world in which he had become a law unto himself he had been tumbled back to realities. So many weeks had he been without any reminder of the law that he had forgotten it existed. He lived in a world where a man's guns and his muscle were law, the one force that mattered.

To be sure he had come to the foothills on orders from a Mounted Police Inspector, but long ago he had forgotten the source of those orders, only their tenor. He had to get North Wind, that was all, and as usual he was getting him in his own way—if at all. The Mounted Police faded from the picture in a world where law and order were at the whim of Indian chiefs—or a man's own powers. Even North Wind had changed from a murderer to someone he had to find, nothing more. His job, not the reason for it. Against North Wind he had no personal feeling.

But the glimpse of the official insignia had shocked him back to his first position, the agent of the Mounted Police,

and with a rather a driving sense of failure of neglect of consideration forgetting Inspector Parker.

He ran. His feet set ground. He would try his best again. He would never rest so long as he had breath in his head. He saw that all the time a real bullet had been growing in his mind, like a long burr. It was now a sharp living head. The truth must have struck him, but had been deviling his thoughts, thinking the opposite of the one thing that should have plagued him. Even a change of the incident he had thought up to his work this day.

And there it could be understood. At a mere glimmer of the Maunder Police imagined he had fled without waiting to see the face beneath. They could not know that from that Peter and Irenetha in the woods, or had Inspector Parker become anxious and sent someone through the house?

He said to a stranger beneath, "If the latter,"—strange words buried in the memories of the detachment where the truth was made known in official form. In that old North Woods was almost as much a stranger to the Maunder Police detachment as to any other. He could be run down as a stranger who ought to go west by himself.

He never said them that he himself was a stranger and no man for their town. And yet the Maunder Police had made no inquiries about them and not even come to the camp in the bushwhack. That was probably due to the severe winter and the depth of the snow. If his presence were discovered now, and it surely would be, he would have to keep out of the way of the Maunder Police. He dare not explain why he was sent. It would get Inspector Parker into trouble and the expense of justice him.

The majority of the time, he paid no notice deserted would suppose still in town and the Maunder Police would be nervous. There would be a search for him both at the west.

He had to wait for the mail and it had not arrived for another day and the trail was packed hard. He sped along in depression and sorrow thinking nothing other than prison.

Suddenly he stopped. He suddenly saw it. That one of his feet was lifted and he kept it there. His eyes widened with amazement. There were birds on the snow at the edge of the trail.

I have a murderer had slipped from the beaten track and had left its mark. The wearer must have stumbled. A scatter of feathers only but it was enough. A grit slowly split the

half closed's face his hands clasped together his lips parted over clenched teeth.

It had happened in an open space where the road had passed close to whatever the stumbling sheepish wretched have dragged over there so to drag the mark it left. Impaired of gut and bone were doubtless.

But Peter knew had gone that way.

In the moments when he had laid the Blaebell's maw those in his hand at the doorway of Blaebell's house a cabin he had never even approached he could recognize anywhere the marks that left. None he had known them.

He started in his long ride mainly riding with distant destinations. It was a long time he had had nothing more yet to make up the Blaebell's account with Blaebell. Somewhere between here and now the location of which ever thing depended where he could find where the Blaebell's house stood.

He didn't know yet just how that the sun had happened. He knew that on the check of the Blaebell's demands had presented him nothing of better. A claim was a great threatment. And a claim was the one thing that could defeat any one having some that would take the same. Examining the old man carefully he saw another that Blaebell To be worth what the sun was back last morning the sun might be buried he could not tell to anyone home.

He turned on. A series of scenes of legend thrilled him. In part it was due to the tantalizing range of the whether in part to the person and the Blaebell's place. That was to be used to effect against. At such a time as the heat of winter it would have been against any character. The sun there was nothing he knew. It seemed that beyond the sun general there was no adequate for attacking from about him. All because he had heard the Blaebell account both and he gritted his teeth tighter and turned on.

Now the the would be advance. She might have appealed to the Inspector to lead him through she was most likely to come herself had he her. She had done a turkey and with surprising familiarity. But he could not think of her at the Blaebell's any more as the one that had treated him so badly. A white woman among Indians where who was as far away North West. That was all that mattered now.

Perhaps the Inspector had disposed of her according and

had handed the case over to the Mud River detachment. Well, no one was going to rob him. He was poor, take his job from him.

He beat his eyes to the trail and kept on. Now and then he saw the marks he sought, and it kept his spirits up. But he must hurry, hurry, to beat the storm.

The trail branched. It branched again and again as Indians left their trail here. It was slow work then to follow the whereabouts he was after and the sky grew darker.

Then the storm began. It was not announced by a high wind as he expected and it caught him unawares. Great flakes drifted down, during every break in the snowy surface, grasping with the need to hasten he pressed onward. He stopped for nothing, but the trail was quickly growing more indistinct and he could not see. Blazing trails increased for he was in the game country now.

After a time he knew he was beaten. But he did not stop. Rather he increased his pace. The main trail was still discernible because it was sunken and hard to walk on but individual marks were wiped out. At last he kept to it more by feel than by sight.

He could be sure of nothing now. Even the trail seemed to peter out and he went blind.

He couldn't stop, could not rest. Something inside drove him on, something which he now striking hard beneath his skin, spoke of others having been that way. He stumbled over invisible shrubs, fell over wind-blown trees. Twice in the thick of the storm, he collided head-on with trees.

One of his whereabouts came lower as he fell. It warned him of the danger of continuing as he was. Should he break a snowshoe and in so doing he might freeze to death. A broken snowshoe would leave him helpless to move about in such a depth of snow. The thermometer low was sinking rapidly. It must be well below zero.

Finding a sheltered spot in the lee of a thicket he stopped to make up his mind what was best to do. He had no fear for himself. He knew how to take care of himself so long as his strength lasted and he had been in more difficult positions. Last night for instance in that burning hut. But here he was, defeated once more. For the trail on which he had counted so much was gone. The search must commence once more from the beginning. It depressed and discouraged him.

He had been so near success, too, for he had read from the

tried he left that Joe Blue Goose was not far ahead. Had the storm held off for another half hour he would have come within sight of the Blackfoot. That was all he required.

Desire made him restless and impatient, reckless. Presently he plunged on blind now in the thickening storm. He had to do something. The snow flew in his face and breathing was difficult except for moments when he paused in the shelter of the trees.

Standing once to recover his breath, a sound came down the wind to him. So brief and unexpected was it that he thought at first it was his nerves playing him tricks. But the blood tingled through his veins and he trusted to that. Whether of human or animal origin, a sound like that must be investigated. In such a storm it could not be ignored. He stood listening holding his breath.

In a burst of wind it came again—a call—someone in distress, in pain, someone shouting weakly, and getting weaker. Someone with little life left in him.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE END OF THE TRAIL

THIS half-breed cupped his hands about his lips and shouted. That tingling sound reached him again, but he knew it was too weak to be in reply. He plunged in the direction from which it seemed to come. The trees were thicker here and though it was darker the foliage above blunted the sound of falling snow, so that he could see for a few yards about him.

Again and again that call automatic distressing. He knew he must hurry if he would not be too late. Stopping every few steps, he kept shouting moving slowly onward, that he might not miss his way.

A shape that was not part of the trunk of a tree against which it bulged near the base came in sight a little to his right. He hurried to it.

The call he had heard had ceased now, and even as he bent over it the man dropped forward onto the snow.

"Awright, awright!" he shouted. "I'm here. Keep awake, fer God's sake! Yuh're freezin'!"

The storm suddenly swept in among the trees, for the moment blotting everything out. The man in the snow lay lifeless.

Hig. Pete dragged him to his feet. It was too dark to see the features even half, the storm being less dense, but that did not matter. The poor fellow was obviously injured and freezing to death, and something must be done to him without loss of time.

He caught the Indian by the shoulders and raised him against the tree. The movement brought a groan of pain, but the half-breed was thankful even for that. It proved the injured man was still alive.

He shook him roughly, trying to revive his circulation, he slapped his face and pounded him on the back with one hand while he held him erect with the other. Then he saw that something had happened to his left leg for it hung crooked. Again and again he slapped and pounded, saving the leg as much as he could.

The groaning grew louder. Blood had commenced again to course through sluggish veins.

But there could not remain there. The injured Indian must be taken somewhere for warmth and treatment. The cold would get him to bone long no matter what care was taken for him. But where was the nearest camp? He knew the answer, even as he asked himself; it was too distant for him to hope to get the half-breed to it, even if the journey were possible in such a storm.

For hours he had roamed about with no sense of direction or location. He had followed a trail, only the end of it material. It had led directly away from the camps. Before it was nothing but wildest forest and mountain.

He looked anxiously about. Where was he? He knew he had come westward, nothing more, every mile of it farther and farther from help.

A fallen log lay close by in its cover of snow an indentation someone had seated himself there long ago, though after storms had done their best to cover the covering. Something familiar about it and his eyes buried into it.

He remembered then. He himself had sat there the day he left the shelter of the hut where the Indian woman had nursed him so well. The hut then could not be far away. His heart leaped with relief and hope.

"Awright master awright," he muttered. "I'll git yuh thar, an' thar ain't no better place than home. Come on,

waking up I gotta get up and I don't like to even dead men. I got down on the ground and I went I thought some man on ver back.

He stopped over something and he got up part of one of the Indians or Indians. It's all the same. The same was broken the part of man. The Indian who must have stepped on a stick or something and the spear it has made them step their ankles. He said he had also come that day left by French a fortification and a house had been built him sometime. I can't see the wall that was built. His name is a other but I know he was a man from New England.

Then he got up and he said that it had to be being a prophet to speak with the Indian. He told me that could be get him over his shoulder. He took his side. Then he got to the hut again he went through last as he got arranged another little house in the sectional. He went in to him and he told me that he was glad to work around in the of house. I asked him that he might be back around there again.

He went off enough. Some time now he had over hundred journeys on a horse just all around around some time there being so the camp would not all winter after the winter was coming. A monkey right there in the cold was warmer than the sun or sun that is the sun. He went outside, you will be up the steps and he took care of his brother.

A bright center before him and he said there is never to be any more depression around. There he was certain that he had the in the night time and he jolted the road, especially going up a long road for his brother. Polyester in the sun.

He was from their name to name for the way was broken. That was forgotten for the Indian was now more silent. The cold was getting hold of him again. Poor little considered suddenly if the spear was still in the body of she would take the spear out. The man for night as she had. Then the night he go all stories he might. He refused to go on. At a rate the other was still he there even deserted he would not have a life going.

The night he had another in to tell as him. He had been walking a lot, running much of the time and now in the night the wind was moving. He started to climb the mountain a hill the breath was shorter. He had to be up against it and jolted on talking to himself to take his mind from the others and suffered that simple as heard.

It had become not nearly colder. The mist from his breath had frozen about mouth and eyes and nose making his eyelids stiff and his hands numb so numb that he dare not release his hold on the Indian to clear the frost from his face. An almost irresistible desire to stop and rest warned him that he would not last much longer. In that desire he knew was the forerunner of lying down to freeze comfortably to death.

A dim square of light broke suddenly through the mist of the storm. Automatically he reached toward it and the Indian slipped from his shoulder onto the snow. He was too far gone to raise him again so he clutched at his shoulders and backed toward the light, dragging him through the snow.

Without knocking, he opened the door and stumbled inside.

For several moments he could see nothing but the dazzling light. His head whirled. He swayed—and slumped to the floor in a heap.

He did not lose consciousness. The squaw was there standing before the stove, staring at him, and at the Indian lying beside him. Someone else was there but he ducked out of sight behind the curtain of blankets. That must be the Indian comga who had never seen Blue Pete rolled to his side turned away from the blankets. He did not wish to see, it was none of his business.

The squaw ran forward and dropped to her knees beside the unconscious Indian. Blue Pete raised himself to his elbow.

"I found him," he said in English. "This was the nearedest place to bring him. You done so much for me I knowed yuh wold mind. An' he needs it more'n I did. Got suthin wrong th' his leg ing an' he was most froze to death. He—"

He stopped blinking his crooked eyes. The squaw had not been listening; she was calling out in Blackfoot.

"Joe Joe Blue Goose! What happened to you?" She turned toward the blankets. "Come quickly!" Suddenly she clapped her hands over her lips and stared fearfully at Blue Pete.

He lay blinking at her, doubtfully his ears. Joe Blue Goose! He looked at the Indian on the floor. It was his Blackfoot friend. Or was he a friend? And the squaw knew him. But that did not surprise him for he had suspected that the Blackfoot might have told her his name.

He clambered to his feet and went to stand over them.

Suddenly he wheel'd to face the curtain. He understood now. He had come to the end of the trail. Behind that curtain was North Wind, the Blackfoot he had come to take back to Medicine Hat. And from the account of finding an unconscious Indian frozen to it in a storm.

A shoulder ran through him. It was all so clear now, so distressing clear. He bowed his head and went to stand before the window, his back to the room. He must have time to think over. It was all so complicated. For months he had had, have known an idea. It's the wildest hunch it was then. He need only drag those blankets aside and take his man. A long search was over now he could get away from the mountains & back home to Mica and the Blackfoot and report success to Inspector Barker. A thrill of triumph flashed through him.

It passed. It was not so simple as that. It was anything but simple.

The voice of the Indian woman came from close behind his shoulder. It was soft and pleading.

"Pete," she said in English. "You know now. . . . We've known all along why you were here but we"

He whirled angrily about pointing to Joe Blue Goose. "That's my friend an' he needs vuh to get to work. Don't bother bout me. It's all that matters jus' yet. His leg's hurt an' he's fiz. Get him way f'm the stove till we take him out a bit."

He picked the Blackfoot up and set him down in a corner.

"I'll git some snow an' melt it an' put his foot in it. Cut off the stockings an' socks. Needn't tell vuh to be kerrful o' the ankle. vuh know a darn sight more bout things like that 'n I do."

He glanced about the room saw a large pail and picked it up. At the door he stopped and threw a glance toward the blankets.

"I'll jes' be lone here by the door. I do' want no trouble jes' yet." He opened the door and went outside.

In a few minutes he was back with the pail filled with snow. He set it on the stove to melt. His face was very grave for his mind was in a whirl. He could not think what to do in the situation in which he found himself: the contretemps into which he had blindly walked. The Indian woman was busy chafing Joe Blue Goose's hands and cheeks. A

foot was exposed, white and stiff, awaiting the cold water Blue Pete dropped to his knees beside it.

"Tasn't had a I thought" he grunted. "Gumme a thick cloth. We got him in time. He's comin' out of it."

The Blackfoot eyes opened stiffly and a low groan broke from him. He tried to raise himself, but a twist of pain sent him back to the fur rug the Indian woman had placed beneath him.

A rustle of movement brought Blue Pete swiftly about, his hand on his gun. The blankets pushed aside, and a tall Indian stalked soberly into the room and stood with bent head, his arms folded before him.

"You've caught up with me, Blue Pete," he said in awkward English.

The half breed frowned. "Yuh both knowed all the time wot I was here fer? Yuh knowed an an yuh done wot yuh done fer me?"

A weak smile gathered in both faces, a cheerless smile. "You were hurt," said the woman simply.

Blue Pete shook his head miserably. "I got a—got a job to do."

"You were sent by the Mounties to get him," said the woman.

To the half breed it was confusing, incredible. How did they know? For several moments he let his mind wander back over the months he had spent there in the foothills, trying to remember where he had failed. He must have talked when he was unconscious after they rescued him. It was a disaster; it would put an end to his work with the Mounted Police if people knew. It would tear him from his two best friends, the Inspector and Sergeant Mahon.

A coldly threatening voice broke in on them.

"It's all right, North Wind. You can get away. I'll keep him here till you're well away."

Blue Pete turned slowly. He knew what he would see. Joe Blue Goose propped back against the wall, had him covered with a gun.

Chaos and more chaos. The half-breed closed his eyes and shook his head irritably. No one had a right to confuse him so. Things were happening too fast. His mind was still fumbling with weariness and strain and with the sudden discovery he had made. Now Joe Blue Goose, the man he had thought his friend, would shoot him to free his fellow-tribesman. There was no doubt of that.

It was not that he was afraid. Goin had been posted at home before and few had even grimed him. But how to save his own life he might have to shoot a friend, and a friend of the square who had saved his life before. Had saved his life when she knew he was there to take her man back to pay the penalty for murder, the white man's penalty.

It was North Wind who solved the difficulty. Raising his hands, he shook his head.

"I am not running away," he said. "It would mean a lifetime of hiding, of living in greater loneliness than here. I won't ask Wild Flower to go on living as we've had to live. Life has that's worth nothing to her." He faced Blue Pete. "Are you taking me back now?"

The half breed sighed. "I don't know. If I don't, I never faced 'em Inspector & I never before. He trusts me. If I do—oh, I don't. I don't."

Wild Flower saw on her feet her flashing eyes glaring at him.

"There's a lot you don't know, Pete," she said. "There's a lot the Indians don't know. All they know is that North Wind killed Bear Head, but they don't know who. I would tell you."

North Wind stepped quickly to her and laid a hand gently on her shoulder. "No, I—Wild Flower. Don't come into this place." His English faltered but was clear. His dark head wrinkled with the effort. "I must face it alone. I killed Bear Head. The white man's law will see nothing else—and that is the law we must obey. I go back to pay."

He straightened and waited.

It was a strange scene, the four of them: three Blackfeet and a half breed who spoke their language and all spoke English. It was their way of recognising the here they must enter. What was happening was outside Indian rules, the Indian world.

Wild Flower stepped away from her husband. Her little body held straight and stiff.

"I will speak. The white man's laws are sometimes heartless. But Blue Pete is not white; he is half of our race and he knows what is right. He will understand. If he does not, he can at least tell Inspector Barker you are not a murderer."

"By the white man's laws . . ." North Wind began but she waved him to silence.

Yes, she said in her own language now and her voice was sad. North Wind killed Bear Head. He killed him because he deserved to die. He died as Blue Pete would have made

him she had her own side been attacked as I was. Bear Head was a bad man. He was always in trouble even with his own people. He he made love to me. I would have nothing to do with him then. Perhaps that was why he persecuted so many women he had made love to and few had treated him. One day I was off on the prairie picking wildstrawberry berries. It was in big a village out far from the mountain. He knew where I had gone and he followed me.

She stopped and her eyes dropped. She turned away to the stove and stood before it for a time silent and unhappy.

North Wind came after me she said. He came just in time. He shot Bear Head. If he must pay the penalty demanded by the white man's laws it will be because he loves me. He is my husband and I Bear Head was a beast. By Indian law Bear Head should have died. He knew it. But he knew the white man's laws would protect him from a death he deserved. And now to take my husband back to pay the making Bear Head pay for protecting his own wife by taking the life of one who had to die to save me.

She had swung about to face them and her voice rang with scorn.

Blue Peter is still unhappy. The white man's laws man not make him pay for that.

The white man's laws demands witnesses. I had none. It would have been his word against mine and and her head dropped. There was a time when I flirted with him. It was when I thought North Wind had ceased to love me. There were witnesses to that the Mounted Police would have found them and made them talk.

She walked quickly to North Wind and placed an arm about his neck. I never loved anyone but North Wind. If he dies I will go too. I'll almost live without him.

Blue Peter closed his eyes. Desperation had been set on his forehead and he turned his back on them. Twice he walked the length of the room his great hands clasping together at his back. Before Wild Flower he stopped and looked into her eyes.

"I go now," he said. I must think. It is so hard for me. He started for the door.

She ran and stood before him her back against the door. You cannot go out in that storm.

It don't matter none he replied dully. "I've been so much an' lived through em. I can't think here, it's too—too close."

to everything. I'll come back." He glanced at North Wind. "Mebbe the hat'l be empty then."

North Wind shook his head. "I will be here. It cannot go on. I will not run away. I am tired. I cannot see Wild Flower fade before my eyes."

"It's so hard fer both of us," murmured Blue Pete.

He opened the door and went out into the storm. He thrust his feet into the thongs of his snowshoes and trotted wearily into the forest.

CHAPTER XXXIV

COMPLICATIONS

THE storm had almost blown itself out, but the cold had increased to a dangerous extent. He had had little time to rest in the cabin, and the mental strain had dragged from him almost his last reserve of strength. As he ran he heard dimly the Indian woman calling frantically after him, but he did not stop.

There were moments when he thought he must be dreaming, when he pictured himself walking in Mountain Stream's camp— in the ranch-house at the 'Bar Y' in one of his caves in the Cypress Hills. He was miserable. He struggled to think things out, fighting for a solution. But he could find none. To let Inspector Barker down was unthinkable, yet he could not see himself taking back to his death a man to whom he owed his life and who had done nothing to deserve the punishment awaiting him. The Inspector would make no allowances; the law was there in black and white and the Mounted Police had a duty to carry it through to the letter. North Wind had killed; that was all that mattered in the eyes of the law.

He saw it so differently himself. The dramatic story Wild Flower had told had almost made him regret that he could not himself have been at hand to exact from Bear Head the punishment he deserved, the punishment he had suffered. To give North Wind up for what he would have been glad to do himself would haunt him for the rest of his life. It would sour every job he undertook for the Mounted Police.

His muscles ached painfully. He felt himself growing stiffer

with the rest and with fatigue. For like terror had been a heavy burden on his heart now. But this he had done had been a most's performance. And at the end of the night he was in the cabin.

It was now dark and without lantern he paddled on. He had to follow the trail for some distance. There were two banks he could not cross the river was broad. At length he knew that he must find a way across. It was not long before he saw the bridge across the river. The light of the moon fell upon the bridge. It was built of timber posts. He saw at once that he was in the right place. He took his paddle and began to row.

He rowed slowly. He felt it was that of the darkness no matter what he would except to expect water to sweep his precious possessions away. In desperation with his blood flowing so freely he swam across to safety.

On and on he staggered.

It was now near noon. The sun had cleared and the whiteness of the snow covered every mark every appearance. He drew several long breaths though they took his strength and his breath. Finally he saw that he had come a long way toward Moctars village. Still he staggered. It could not be far away now.

The cold air and a fast walking had held the bone he staggered at last all the strength was the gone. A dog barked from a nearby. But the dog was his. All the time he knew that his dog was there and he staggered but

sleptfully the dog had held him staggered and across the snow past the chief after the winter again. He had not had food for days. He only knew that he could not live without it and it was warm. Here was his dog waiting a master. Here was he. He waved about hoping the man that came from it rest. He reached the door. He knocking found himself the path and pressed the door open and he found the aged man.

He answered to his call of his bark. He lay on a pair of furs with nose pale yet full of courage his own courage also. He felt strange a person and named unknown almost frightened. His eyes opened and he looked about.

Sometime stood at his head bending over him smiling. It was Sergeant Mahon.

XXXV

WINTER NIGHT

BLUE PETE blinked and closed his eyes. He must be dreaming. He wouldn't have been dreaming for days. So many terrible things had happened. He felt no pain only a great lassitude. Had an accident happened to him again? had he been shot and had they taken him back to Medicine Hat? In that case how long had he been unconscious?

And this was no room that he could remember at Medicine Hat.

He kept his eyes closed and listened. A guttural voice was speaking in fire from another room. Mountain Stream. He lifted his eyelids to form a narrow slit. He lay just in a window and somehow it recalled a critical scene of a lot up saw trying to struggle through such a wind w. His face twisted in a smile.

The scene progressed to a Mounted Policeman coming on snowshoes through the trees.

He looked to where he had seen the Sergeant. Mahon was still there still smiling saying nothing.

"Yuh hadn't need t' come fer me 'sergeant'" he grumbled. "I'm awfright I'm durn but . . ." He stopped; he had been going to assure the Sergeant that he was doing what the Inspector had sent him to do, but he wondered if that were true. He had as yet come to no decision about that.

The Sergeant moved to his side. "I'm not so sure of that, Pete."

To the half breed it seemed to be an answer to the thought he had had in his mind but had not put into words and he closed his eyes again.

"Wh's ja come?" he asked. He had to gain time to think — and it was still so hard to think. The three Blackfeet in the lonely cabin stared before him their eyes appealing asking him what he was going to do.

"We'd heard nothing about you, Pete," Mahon explained. "We were anxious. You've been gone more than three months. The Inspector's in a fever. Mira too the same go to the barracks, rode in through one of the worst of ours we ever had, and told us we had to find you or the wright! He beat leather over Blue Pete. Does anyone here understand English?"

Blue Pete shook his head. "Mora known yuh come?"

"By this time she knows I found you. I knew it was you at the camp yesterday south of here. You left just as I got there. The squaws described you so that I could not mistake you. The Inspector got permission from Edmonton to let me search for you. It wasn't necessary to tell who you were here."

"Yuh didn't needta," said the half-breed repeated. "This ain't no place for a Mountie. Too durn easy to get lost, an' freeze to death. Near done it myself, doops times."

"You nearly managed it last night. You were done up when you reached the camp. What happened? I never saw you tired like you were."

"Perts near got lost," murmured Blue Pete. He was thinking of the scene in the faraway cabin. "I do like the mountains, you know that. The storm got me mixed up, a bit. Reckon I got sorta twisted. I didn't know I was comin' here."

"It's good you did," Sergeant Matron's face was grim. "They don't seem to like you at the camp, you left yesterday. I can't get it all because I understand little Cree, but you were trying to find someone and it wasn't North Wind. They said you ran when you saw me."

Blue Pete was prepared for it. "I seen a Mountie runnin', but I didn't know 'twas you, Sergeant. Yuh see, I gotta keep outta the way o' Mounties wen I'm on this job. So I vanished when I seen one."

The Sergeant whispered. "Have you seen North Wind? Do you know where he is?"

"I got a good idea," replied the half-breed cautiously. "I'll tell yuh bout it wen I git a bit rested. Do' wanna talk 'bout it now."

"So long as you know—and will tell me," agreed the Sergeant. "But you've been here a long time. Mountain Stream has explained some of it—as much as I can understand. You were sick—or hurt?"

Blue Pete gave a running sketch of his accidents. North Wind and Wild Flower were, in the story, merely a pair of Indians who had found him.

"Who was it shot you?"

"Dunno. Mebbe took me for a panther."

Mountain Stream hearing their voices, had come from the other room. He stood silently, waiting to join the conversation. The Sergeant invited him forward with a smile.

"Light-in-Dark is lucky," said the chief. "He is strong, or he would have frozen to death last night. He has been lucky."

so often. He glanced from the half-breed to the Sergeant.

"Perhaps he is not so bad after all."

"Oh, it looks as if I'm all right," returned Blue Pete in cheer. "We've met or seen or doesn't know why I can away. I have many friends in the towns or camps. The Mounted Police are really our friends. They—"

Mountain Man's confession was revealed in his puckered brows. "They're as bad as the Indians," he said.

"Not now, this one," he adds to the Medicine Hat. "I am not. We know that the Mounted Police don't want me but I could not afford to take a chance."

He interpreted most of it for the Sergeant. Then I treat you well. Sergeant, he says and Mac and I. They're too sheered to do anything else."

The Sergeant shook his head. "I might repeat. I see you had them the same as I. That's where running from us."

"Not so much. I just hunted at it. If they took it that was tant my fault. Anyways, can't run to Neches. I could do the same to me any day."

"He seems to think a lot of you," said Maher. "He was badly upset when he was arrested in last night. I'm glad you stand in good with the Indians now and I have and made together with you an road the straight to North Wind Ranch. I wish you'd go with the Indians after the farhers. It just fit the job. A man as good as fit we'd get after the Blackfeet and it won't help. If we don't burn he added with a laugh. "Mind he after us and that might lead to complications."

Blue Pete shuns his head suddenly. "It's a long story, Sergeant. You ask for it now because I suppose I got party mixed up with Indians. I never thought I'd live."

Maher saw that his hand trembled over the writing on his mind and that it was useless there for and told with it speak of at the moment. It truly told him but there was no need for haste. When Blue Pete was asked what talk was there enough. He fancied the half-breed was to worse condition than he had ever seen him, and that added to the accidents he had suffered from, had affected him rather seriously. It would not be fair to press him now for the story.

"All right, Pete," he said. "Take your time, but you'll be all right in a day or two." He was not so quick.

Far into the night that followed Blue Pete threw aside the fur and rose. The soft four-covering made his movements

almost soundless, and he had gathered up his guns and ammunition and was making for the door when Mountain Stream appeared suddenly from the other room. He strode to the door and, laid his back against it. In the moonlight that entered through the window panel of the room was almost clear as day.

"Yes, I knew you planned to go again," he said. "I cannot let you. It would get me into trouble with the Mounted Police. Besides, I want you here. I know how Light in Dark can shoot. I know how strong he is. I know you were not so weak as you tried to make the Sergeant think. You are afraid of the Mounted I dare say am I? But I have to stay and face them. It's a big job I will put for it."

Blue Pete's teeth chattered together. "Do you mean you are going to try to stop me?"

"If I do. Unless Light in Dark is the better man." He spoke without acrimony.

The half-breeds had made up his mind; he was not going to be halibut. The story he had promised Sergeant Mahon was not yet ready to be told. He placed his guns on the long table in the middle of the room and added the table against the wall.

"Mountain Stream, I know you are my friend. I understand if I beat you you can tell the Mounties I'll say that you tried to stop me. And," he added in English, "which I do well here, the more so to show I honored you. See I'm through with you. He changed his tone. "I do warn the Mountain Stream is a strong man and a great chief. And I am, not at my best."

He pointed to the door. The corners of the room remained dark.

"You will need more light. I can see in the dark, and I would not take advantage of you. Open the door."

Mountain Stream lifted the latch and drew the door wide open.

"It would interest me to know if Light in Dark is the man I think he is. If you overtake me I will know you are. If you find you are still my friend, but—but perhaps you will not be so important here."

For a moment Blue Pete thought he saw a solution. If he let Mountain Stream win the approaching fight the Indians would let him go. But not before Sergeant Mahon had cornered him again for his story, the story he had not yet made up. Besides, he could not see himself not doing his best.

Mountain Stream stalked to the centre of the room and

grasped his long arms hawking him. There were several methods of attack open to the Indian, many tricks that might succeed in flogging the bear, but there was a test of strength and he accepted the challenge without hesitation. Stepping forward, he uttered a roar.

The bear saw his friend and came一步步 away to meet the pair before him. They began to roar. They were almost of the same height and the same weight so that neither had the advantage in the roaring test. The Indian began to roar together and strode forward until Roanles stopped.

The roar of a bear always penetrates far and the Indians then saw a Mountain Lion come across the trail. He grabbed his teeth in four licks and with the roar the bear's roar perhaps alone between the barking teeth. But several moments the surprising effect of his roar had gripped them both and Roanles turned to west. At last off balance he gave ground and started to slowly lurch.

Light at first, it grew in darkness, he wanted.

Ros Pete had known the bear taken early aware of his strength but he still felt the strain of the previous day. He took a few steps aside to study the bear. He staggered and the effect of the strain. It was all I could do to keep myself. Mountain Lion am I strong. Must I do more to convince him that I must go.

Mountain Lion stood facing him with bared legs grim and unbroken. Ros Pete seized at his weight his arms about the bear's neck and roared. The latter closed his mouth against it but he could not free himself. Hauling his weight he bent up against the hard bared teeth with all the power he could muster at such low position. For a moment Ros Pete staggered with the shock of it but he managed to hang on, having his bear against the bear's shoulder and covering him back. He was helpless. With a groan Ros Pete let him drop to the floor.

He was at his best a start in long recovering his wind watching every movement his antagonist. Ros Pete gave him time to rest. He was cold as tests to be continuing. That growl was more unbroken than I get away.

A noise at his neck sent him leaping aside. A squaw had entered from the other room. She carried a rifle to the barrel and was ready to shoot at Mountain Lion. Ros Pete saw her.

Cut back he or level angles. Cut back and stay there I command."

The squaw backed through the hanging skins, and let them drop behind her.

Blue Pete grinned. I could not beat you both he said.

But Light in Dark has not yet beaten me, declared Mountain Stream. We have just started. I would prefer that you had not yesterday behind you.

It is better me said Blue Pete waving a disengaging arm.

The hard adhesion of his arms extended before him. Blue Pete edge along the wall. He hated what he saw he would have to do and he could not afford to delay it or the alarm might reach the sergeant.

Suddenly he sprang to the attack. Seizing one of the chief's extended arms he whirled about and sent his opponent flying over his shoulder to strike the corner of the table and lie with his head knocked out of him. He sat up rubbing his head and his stomach.

Blue Pete waited. He could have fled but Mountain Stream was too yet satisfied and he would spread the alarm.

Slowly the chief rose to his feet. Almost as he did so he struck. The blow caught Blue Pete on the forehead. It jerked his head back and a sharp pain in his neck made him bear for a moment that something had broken. The chief, seeing his advantage came on. But Blue Pete dodged away from him until the pain was gone.

It is not to be all strength then? he asked.

I must perfect myself replied the chief. Light-in-Dark must do the same. Anything goes now.

Blue Pete grunted. He stood his ground. Mountain Stream came on. He held his fist shut forward. It struck the chief twice in the eye brow. Blood gushed instantly. Temporarily blinded he retreated but Blue Pete struck again, this time at the other brow. In that vulnerable spot the skin parted.

It was the end. the chief was helpless with the flow of blood. He straightened. He held out his hand.

Light in Dark has convinced me that he is the better man. I can fight no more for I cannot see.

Blue Pete seized his hand and led him to a bench. "Sit there. I am so sorry. It is not a bad hurt - only blood. The wounds will heal in two days. I did not wish to hurt but I had to."

The squaw entered the room, the rifle still in her hand. At the sight of the blood she rushed at the half breed. But

Mountain Stream had heard her, and had wiped the blood from one eye. He sprang before her and flung her back through the curtain of skins.

"This is not for you to interfere," he snapped. Two friends who always respected each other have settled a misunderstanding. The better man won. He is still my friend. Get water and a clean cloth." He turned to Blue Pete, "I require attention for a time, then I must tell the Mounted Posseman. You will have time to get away." He signed. "I'm so sorry—so sorry we cannot work together. We could do so much together."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FRIEND AGAIN

BLUE PETE knew he would be followed, that Sergeant Mahon would be after him with the first daylight. The fresh snow would make his tracks only too easy to follow, and until the Indians were out in numbers on their trap-lines after the storm he would have to keep going.

What worried him most however was what the Sergeant would think of him. On many an occasion he had given cause for suspicion in the minds of the Mounted Police, though always he had managed to clear himself sufficiently well to remain their friend. This time it was different. Deliberately he had fled from his best friend, the friend who had come to see what had happened to him. The inference would be that he was protecting North Wind from the law, that he did not intend to help the Mounted Police.

It would make them more determined than ever to get the Blackfeet and when Sergeant Mahon started on a trail he never stopped until he reached its end.

It hurt to think what the Sergeant would think of him, yet he had had no time to see how he could avoid it in any other step than the one he had taken. He had to have time to think. Whatever stand he finally took he would not be rushed to a decision. Now, no matter what that decision was, he would find it difficult to clear himself with the Inspector. But if he took North Wind back, or surrendered him to the Sergeant, never again would he enjoy Police work as before.

It was all so overwhelming and devastating.

As he lay there, he saw the same sort of trail that would give him a clue as to whom the sergeant all he perceived with the weight of the gun at his back. He could not tell all he was but at least he had a suspicion. It seemed to have been from the stream of the prairie. Far and to the right with North Wind's name on it what remained of his physical and mental resources. He had laid down his gun but had him to pass. Everything over there had caused him to make him master-above.

He had to fight through it and he knew he dare not turn back now or face those circumstances. What he did find there, North Wind knew was located the shore of these hills near the Missouri river. In that winter or later he would be there again, fighting and seeking those fugitives.

He had no choice but to go south with the trail he had the best chance of getting away but the best where North Wind had taken a long path by him so that even he might pick up traces while he was facing Indians. He knew the sergeant was experienced enough to make his tracks well by his surroundings and would be unable to pick them out unless the trail was well beaten. He knew if he could get off in a straight line he would have a thousand yards start and could lose his trail in the forest by the time he got to the camp of a tribe of Indians.

By the light of the moon he had, however, crossed the first camp and was passing the second when a shadow of the first camp, who was the last and last one he had seen set out on their way, was to the left. He was lost in thought. Shortly after he saw a faint trail a bright light from behind it.

It kept him free to consider his problem. What about North Wind?

It would be such a simple solution to give North Wind up to put an end to the problem and return to the 3 Bar's and Mrs. and how odd with the appearance and apparel of Inspector Parker and the sergeant. He was less certain that Mrs. would appear when she heard the whole story. She would stand it from him sooner or later.

As the hours passed another thought came into his mind. Suppose all his savings were buried under his gun. Was the conclusion that here he could suppose more fully with North Wind that his arrival was being pursued. He knew something of how the Blackfeet must have led all these men also, with the difference that North Wind's life was at

stake. The Blackfeet too had a wife who loved him, a wife who would endure any privation for his sake.

He stopped to think it over. What was to prevent him throwing up the white feather? He might return to Medicine Hat and prove to have failed. But he could not deny that he had a sort of shot to tell. He had a rope around himself there with Mahon.

Even could he have known that it would not save North Wind. Always he would be sought; always he would be a fugitive, fretting about Wild Horse, forced to live in seclusion, far from his friends.

Could he go to North Wind and warn him to leave the district to go and leave no trail? It was the most promising plan he could think of, but it had the same fault as the other.

One thing he knew now, that he could never hand North Wind over to the Mounted Police.

What North Wind and Wild Horse had done for him was not the deciding factor. His old red comrade has own life worth protecting as a neighbour. The white man's laws were unpleasing because North Wind had not lived in self defence. Crimes such as that attempted by Bear Head must be punished by the law and by those threatened by them. That was the stand Inspector Barker would take.

Perhaps. But Blue Peter had lived through so many years of being a law unto himself to be content now for anyone else to decide for him, and his decision was that North Wind had done nothing to deserve to die and no law could make it otherwise.

He looked about with some idea of locating himself. He must get back to North Wind and tell him his decision. Lighten the weight the Blackfeet and his wife had to bear her away before him, and to the north west he recognized a mountain peak that he knew stood directly west of the Blackfeet's cabin and be set off directly toward it ignoring trail cutting through the forest, climbing hills and descending into ravines. The sergeant would surely find his trail but he must get to North Wind and tell him. Mahon would not have come far enough to find his trail until the next day and much might happen before that. For one thing, another storm threatened.

It was a rough course he followed for he turned aside only for obstacles he could not overcome. The grouchiness of his

decision brooked no delay. He had come a long way and it was longer still to the hut and the hours seemed interminable.

Hurried and impatent a disturbing question crept into his mind. Had North Wind seized the opportunity to escape? He had promised to remain but Wind Flower and Joe Blue Face would be against it; they might have convinced him. If that were so, the Indian had it never been so that the man whom he or had saved had intended not to hand him over to the law but to return him. A distressing thought almost as distressing as if he had seen the opposite occurring. If he never saw North Wind again he would always despise him and so would Wild Flower and Joe Blue Face. He could not bear to think of that.

He increased his pace. He must reach the hut before they had time to take to flight. Even to remember that he had ever thought of handing the Blackfoot over made him feel mean and traitorous. There was never a danger that North Wind would kill another. He was not a killer. The one life he had taken even with such provocation haunted him now though Indians took life more carelessly than did the whites.

A score of three months before flashed before him of an Indian crawling up a mountain side to complete a murder of a second Indian finishing him. Of that second Indian driving the other off when Mac Peter's own life was threatened as he climbed to render help.

It was all so plain now the second Indian was North Wind. North Wind who did not wish to be seen North Wind, who could have shot living had had he tried but who was content merely to frighten him off.

On and on he raced the crack of his snowshoes ringing through the forest. As far as it was he determined to persist but it was more from anxiety than from strain. His feet seemed to lag. He could not go fast enough.

He had forgotten Sergeant Mahon suggestion his own longing to get away from the mountains and back to his white wife. In his mind was now only of North Wind and Wild Flower waiting now in the hut for his return shaking with dread. They had saved his life and he carried them, impossible heights he started with flaring fire.

He had seen no sign of human life throughout the day, except the trails in the snow. The silence commanded to

work on him. He wanted to shout. He would have welcomed even the shuddering cry of the mountain lion.

Then the thundering silence was broken by a shout. Instantly he dropped to the snow and rifle drawn looked about. He knew then that something had hit him at his brain for several moments but he had so much else to think of. At the same time there could be no danger from one who would shout.

He crept through the snow to a thicket and raised his head to look through it.

The shout was repeated. The creak of his snowshoes must have been heard. He is dead.

Over a white pointed hill not far away came North Wind, swinging along straight toward him.

The picture was still incomplete. North Wind could not be a threat yet distinctly there was some sort of danger about Unatisfied; he lay sniffling and looking everywhere. Troubird he rose to his feet.

North Wind saw him and waved. "I've been looking for you," he called in English.

"An' I'll be darned if I wasn't lookin' for you, North Wind," returned the half-breed eagerly. "Jes' makin' fer yer but Hadta tel' yuh sullen. I ain't fur now to the hot is it? Let's git back. I'm darn hungry." He remembered that he had had nothing to eat all day.

"I was afraid something might have happened to you," said North Wind in his own language. "You were tired when you left and the storm had been so bad and the cold was so intense."

Blue Pete was not listening. He looked the Indian over marvelling that he could ever have contemplated handing him to the Mounted Police. So you came out to look for me. He rubbed an embarrassed hand over his lips. I ain't used to it, he said a long while. I bin beaten after makin' all them little bratwurst till Mica com. Jes' the same it's burn more o' yuh. He stopped and gulped.

North Wind grumbled-sighed. I know. But you have to do it. it's your duty. It wouln't hel' me if you tried to death and Wind Flower and I would hate to think that had happened to you. The Mounted Police would still be after me and I wouln't face a lifetime of hating. Perhaps the law — perhaps . . ."

Blue Pete stopped him with a fierce gesture. "Dang it,

dedju thank I'd give yuh up to them? Thank I'd do a theng like that?" He was indignant and angry.

North Wind hunched at him. "The—the Mounties are here I know. They come for me. I can't go on fading."

"I'm hidin' myself," said Blue Pete with a grimace. "I know how it feels. I run away from Sergeant Mahon so I cud tell yuh 'ya ain' got nothin' to fear. I know wot I am goin' to tell 'em. On y yah gotta keep way from Medicine Hat, that's al. I'll tel' 'em yuh." He stopped and fell into a crouch shivering about with startled eyes. "With n' wrong here. Get down." He caught North Wind's arm and dragged at him.

A shot rang out. Blue Pete dropped and lay still without even a groan. But through his fading consciousness he heard the sound of two more shots.

CHAPTER XXXVII

SERGEANT MAHON ON THE TRAIL

SERGEANT MAHON had slept badly. He was oppressed with a feeling that everything was not right between him and Blue Pete. So that when Mountain Stream's squaw came pounding at the door of the hut he was on his feet instantly, gun in hand. She led to the chief's cabin, explaining nothing, but in her manner was an urgency that made him fear that the worst had happened to the half-breed.

Mountain Stream, a bandage about his forehead almost blinding him, managed to get to the Sergeant a picture of what had happened, sufficient, at least, to protect himself. Mahon saw the torn eyebrows, and knew the fight had been a res one.

He knew then that, indeed, the worst had happened, but not in the form he had pictured. Blue Pete had deceived him. His disinclination to tell the story he mentioned was because he did not wish to tell it at any time. Whatever he had to tell would not be to his credit. As usual, he had done something that would worry the Inspector, and in this case it must be serious. It could only be that he had no intention of delivering North Wind to the law.

He had admitted that he knew something of North Wind's whereabouts and the sergeant had not pressed him for the story because he thought the telling of it was of no concern to a man who had agreed to do all he could help and harm to bear. And now he had only one rather than two bones to the sergeant's claim that they should take up their hunt together.

He knew a little more concerning the chief, but little need be added. He knew all that was necessary to know to direct his men so that Peter must be found. On the way to the hills later he had noticed the fresh marks on the snow. There must be other Indians there.

Illustration he made for the sergeant. He could not hope to follow a trail through the forest in the night. However, he wished to make a sketch representation of the marks left by Peter. His instructions that he might be able to recognize them from others. This caused Wilson, who was interested with the illustration, to smile.

For a long time he remained silent. In order to make out what Peter had been up the winter before through the trees. Later, however, he said, "I can see where at the half-breed was making an effort to get away from him. I suppose it is as he was for sure pursued. But the man he followed knew him well. This Indian was unusual in his ways and I can be sure the Indian knew. Whether he went without definite purpose, I do not know. but in the shooting business he was good, but not brilliant. He did not think it likely the half-breed would risk cutting any other engagement. He would keep further in toward the mountains where he was known to have friends."

Turkmen, Wilson, smiled and the two exchanged a look but at the bushes, where his voice was muted. It was not so much that he thought a lot like Peter, except of course that before this time the half-breed would have done something that would get them all up together.

There had been a short silence after that. In here in the foothills where the law was simple, something heard of from outside. There were no Indians, yet, other than the Indians of the country to the lawless. If the half-breed had a long history Mr. Russell was at a disadvantage for he spoke little true and he would speak no Indian for no one information he might give.

Toward the middle of the afternoon he saw that he was

turing. He had come a long way, and without food or rest, over rough country and in fresh, powdery snow. The beat of his feet through his moccasins kept forming small balls of ice between them and the gut of his snowshoes, and he was forced frequently to stop to break them away.

After a time he realized how foolishly he was acting and he stopped to think things over. Tired now, in another couple of hours darkness would be on him and he had nowhere to take refuge. Lack of a roof was not so threatening as spending the night in the open in the physical condition in which he found himself.

He considered turning back toward the nearest encampment. By striking a used trail he was bound to come on one before long.

He reached down to readjust the thongs, and to clear away the ice. As he did so a shot rang out to the north-west. And in its echo two more joined. Without waiting for more, he set off at top speed in the direction from which they had come.

He ran as he had never run on snowshoes before, crashing through and over shrubs, leaping logs, tearing through the trees. Several times he fell but always he plunged to his feet and raced ahead. He was strangely excited nervous, and he did not know why. It might have been hunters.

Somehow he knew it was not.

A fresh track left by someone on snowshoes suddenly crossed before him. So fresh was it that the disturbed snow at the edges had not yet been blown in. The tracks were joined by another. Two had been there—and close by in the snow was the indentation of a man's body, and beneath it a splodge of blood.

And only one had left the place.

Puzzled and wild with excitement, he looked about. All about, for many paces, it was open so that no marks could be concealed yet two had been there, and only one had left. The man who had fallen was being carried away. It was the story of the shots he had heard.

He did not call out. No warning of his nearness must be given. Someone had been shot.

He picked up the trail, and followed cautious now, prepared for anything. The route the man had taken was along the easiest course, for the burden of a man's body must be great on snowshoes.

After a time he saw them. They were dropping out of sight over a crest a hundred yards ahead a lumpy figure hanging over the shoulder of another. He hurried after them.

"Stop!"

He was within forty yards and he stood with raised rifle.

The Indian turned then slowly lowered his burden to the snow and pointed.

"He is hurt bad," he said in halting English. "He is very brave. I will not run. We must get him to the hut."

Mahon ran forward and sank to his knees beside the half-breed. A great pool of blood stained the front of the unconscious man's sweater. Mahon now

"How far is it to the hut you speak of?"

The Indian pointed. "Not far. That way. He is so very heavy. I am tired. We get him there quick."

"I'll carry him once for a while." Mahon offered. "Here!" He handed his rifle over.

North Wind stared at him then hesitatingly took the weapon. "I would have got him there somehow," he said.

In turns they carried Blue Pete making more speed now. At intervals a groan told them the half-breed was still alive but there was no other sign of life. The wound was not bleeding now but much blood had been lost and Mahon was frantic with anxiety.

Slowly he had fallen when they sighted the hut. It was Mahon's turn to carry and North Wind ran ahead. There was still a chance to cross and from it the hut was invisible. The door was open when the sergeant staggered up to the hut. Gently he laid Blue Pete on the blankets Wild Flower had spread for him.

She pushed him roughly aside and commenced to eat away the stained sweater. Mahon looking on saw that she knew what she was doing and was relieved.

The right side was torn loose up under the shoulder. Wild Flower bent her head to it and nodded happily.

"It is not so bad," she said, looking up into Mahon's face. A look of fear and sadness drove her happiness away.

Mahon noticed it but did not try to understand. He started for the door. "I will get a doctor right away."

"Where from?"

It stopped him abruptly. He passed a hand over his forehead. "I must do something."

"No doctor nearer than Edmonton," said Wild Flower.

"He would be too late. Run all right soon. Maybe long rest I took after him."

"How can you be sure he is all right?"

"I nursed him before," said Wild Flower.

Mahon recalled what Blue Pete had told him. "You were the one who did that? He told me of it. He owes you so much already. I hope you are right about his wound." He turned to North Wind. "Who shot him?"

North Wind shrugged. "Me not know. I not see 'shot at me too."

"Yes, I heard. There were three shots. I heard them."

"I shot back. I did not try to kill this time."

Mahon was anxiously asking. "Has he made enemies here?"

North Wind shook his head slowly. "If the Indians knew he was a breed then would be angry."

Mahon looked up sharply. "You know that?"

Wild Flower said. "He was here for weeks. We knew we . . ."

"Do what you can for him. It looks as if he's coming round. As soon as he's fit I'll get him moved to a hospital."

"Three hours fast ride to railway station," said Wild Flower. "Then hours more to Fort Edmonton. He get better here faster. Her eyes lit up approach. Let us nurse him here till he is well. Then we go."

The sergeant looked her over with puzzled eyes. He had never seen North Wind or Wild Flower, and in his anxiety for Blue Pete for a few days was meaningless. "You seem to like him. All right. I want you both to do your best for him. You'll be paid. I'll go and wire for a doctor."

They watched him start back through the night. It was clear and the stars would guide him. His opinion of the Indians was changing. "Everyone either loves or hates him," he said to himself.

From behind the curtain of blankets Joe Blue Goose heard every word! Wild Flower and North Wind had hurried him out of sight in time to avoid the sergeant, for his presence would have told the whole story. When Mahon was gone he humped into the outer room.

During the night North Wind carried him to the nearest encampment, and left him there.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

BLUE PETE'S STORY

It was ten days before they could get Blue Pete to the hospital at Franklin. Major McNamee said a dozen of the agents had come on the scene and been trying to advise him not to go to the hospital. A messenger had already come to Major McNamee from the agents who had been held captive between the camp and the hospital ward in the North Woods—the other he had failed.

For Blue Pete the ten days in the bush were a torment. He was anxious to be back with his men in the North Woods now. In his first moments of freedom there had fallen things over. It was evident that the Indians had not forgotten what all the traps had done to them. They had given the traps back to the men. So they were Major McNamee and myself to fight. There was nothing else we could do.

Blue Pete was still grieved at that he could not tell Major McNamee what was going on. He had been so afraid Major McNamee would be angry and shoot him. Major McNamee would never have treated us like animals if he had known about the Indian traps. Blue Pete had been so afraid Major McNamee would shoot him. But after the traps had been given back to the Indians, he had told Major McNamee that there was no reason for him to be afraid of him. Major McNamee had told him it is easier to be afraid than to be afraid of nothing.

Living in the bush and not Major McNamee here Blue Pete and I had not been treated all right. He had had a heavy cold. Major McNamee did not.

INTERVIEWING THE HOSPITAL WITH PETE

Blue Pete said—
I've been thinking. I've thought more than I can't get the facts. I'm a fool, but I am. And I know the I made me do that the day they abandoned me. But I'm sure I can't get away from the consequences. I'm afraid the Indians have got me thinkin' that. And I'm afraid that I have got to play in the hospital longer. I haven't got a cent. I will get up an walk right now if you let me. I have money in the hospital account of my wife. She died now, and I'm worried about that her husband. I wanna get back to the North Woods and . . .

Major McNamee interrupted him with concern. We won't be able to get you there for a month even if we get you to the Hat

The snow's too deep out that way. We aren't going to cut a road for eighty miles when you can be better cared for in the Hat."

"Whiskers! get me that rain."

"Whisk is Mahon weighed would drown in the snow out that way this year."

"Blue Pete weighed. But all we call him because—"

It was late March before I reached Mexia. Hat-Mah was at the station to meet him having ridden in through the long snow to be in time. She was too sure of that her husband was in no worse condition than was reported by the Inspector. In the face of his protests they carried him to the hospital with leaps for the doctor's orders not to make a bath. There he had to wait for them.

For more than a week the Inspectorлогеr questioning him but at last his silent visits became embarrassing to both of them.

One day he plumb sat himself aggressively in the chair at Blue Pete's bedside. And now about North Wind he began.

"Blue Pete had his story ready. Dead?" he said.

"Dead? Are you sure?"

"Buried him just west out there in the mountains."

The Inspector leaped up and walked. He glanced about to see they had the room to themselves. Did you shoot him?"

"Not me. Another. See he come on him an buried him."

"Not but you never mentioned this, not even to Sergeant Mahon."

I was purty near out when the Sergeant come on me fast in Mountain Stream's cabin. I was feeling mighty bad an I was sorry for North Wind an his squaw. She was there too. I thought maybe the Sergeant might wa' ta bring her back an so nothing to her an she tell do nothing. That was w'y I kee' quiet. Then I got this belief an I wasn't talkin much fer a long time. I thought maybe if I told the Sergeant he'd think it was all over an he'd come an see me than an them Neches ad a keep me than all winter. They wanted to."

That Indian who shot North Wind?"

"An accident. I seen it. We buried him deep so the cougars wouldn't git him."

Whether Sergeant Mahon was deceived or not Blue Pete never knew. A talk ther had the day he left the hospital for the ranch left him more doubtful than ever.

"So you buried North Wind with your own hands," said the Sergeant. "It must have been some job in the frozen ground."

"Sure it was. But I owed him a lot, he saved me life once."

"Did you bury Wild Flower too?"

Blue Pete was prepared. "Wild Flower? Who's he?"

"Never mind." "But you told the Injun, too. But never mind."

"Sergeant said Blue Pete. I'll tell yuh suthur. North Wind give me the hell story, see he died. Bear Head followed Wild her squaw out on the prairie an' attacked her. North Wind come up in time an' shot him. That ain't murder."

"Probably he deserved it." The Sergeant asked thoughtfully. "And when even a murderer saves a man's life he shouldn't be handed over to justice by the man he saved should he? Was the Injun, or lots of 'em a killer? North Wind's name has been wigglin' up in our lists officially. There are times when I am not satisfied."

He turned away. Whiskers, the little pony, sniffed her nose toward him and he patted her.

"By the way, Pete, you haven't told me who shot you?"

The half breed snarled and scowled faintly in concern o' the Mountains. He looked out over the streets from which the snow had disappeared. "I'm feelin' jes' fine now," Sergeant.

"I'll be takin' a trip some day soon an' I do want nobody to search for me. There's bunches up thar in the mountains here a mighty fine carouse o' marmots and a couple skins. I'm gonn' back to git 'em. I won't be able to do nothin' fer the Mountains—not if I git back."

"Going to run into some more bank robbers up that way do you think?" smiled the Sergeant and turned and walked away.

NOVELS BY LUKE ALLAN

BLUE PETE: OUTLAW

"Mr Allan," says the *Liverpool Post*, "has many of the finer gifts of the novelist," and that Blue Pete story, as *Truth* wrote of a previous exploit, is "full of thrills and excitement."

BLUE PETE BREAKS THE RULES

"Mr Allan keeps his action moving fast, but while doing so, finds time for description of incidents in the annual 'round-up' which are extremely vivid and have an air of complete authenticity"—*Manchester Dispatch*.

BLUE PETE PAYS A DEBT

"A grim struggle for supremacy on a wild trail, told in a story packed with exciting incidents." *Nottingham Journal*

BLUE PETE: REBEL

"The author has the happy knack of getting Pete into all sorts of trouble, but extricating him in a fascinating manner."—*Manchester Evening News*

BLUE PETE: HORSE THIEF

Blue Pete is at his best in this hard-hitting, snap-shooting novel of the wind-swept prairies and the hills beyond.

NOVELS BY LUKE ALLAN

THE WESTERNER

Claude Maughan, an Englishman, finding his late uncle has been swindled in a Canadian land deal, sets out to punish the land agent, Daniel Corfield. A thrilling story of life and adventure in Canada.

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Another novel of the great North-West. In this story Luke Allan gives us the delightful little tenderfoot journalist, Morton Standford, who blunders into a drama full of thrills and incident.

BLUE PETE, HALF-BREED

The story of Blue Pete and his favourite horse, Whiskers, of the rustlers, the quick-shooting cowboys and the Royal North-West Mounted Police, a full of thrills and hair breadth escapes.

THE RETURN OF BLUE PETE

Blue Pete, half-breed, cowboy rustler-detective, did not die after all. On the contrary, he lived to enjoy many thrilling adventures with his little horse, Whiskers.

BLUE PETE, DETECTIVE

Blue Pete is a fascinating character, you never know what he is going to do next. As a detective he was the terror of all wrong-doers, and there wasn't much that he would miss with a revolver. A book of breathless excitement and adventure.

